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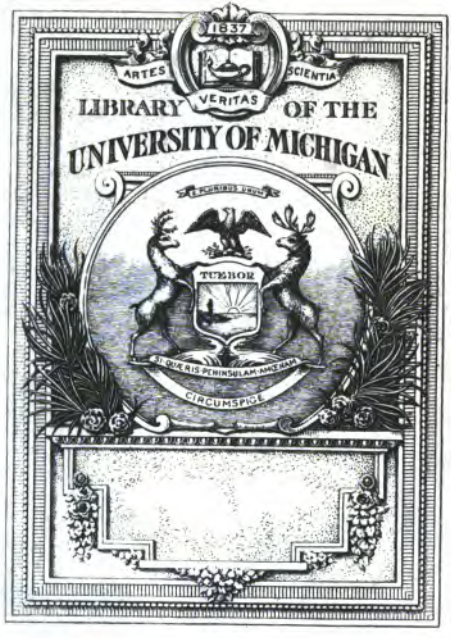
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THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY UNVAILED:

IN A

DISCOURSE,

Wherein is held forth

The Oppoſition of the *Doctrine*, *Worſhip*, and *Practices* of the

Roman Church,

TO

The *Nature*, *Deſigns*, and *Characters* of the **Chriſtian Faith.**

By *GILBERT BURNET*,
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

LONDON,
Printed by *W. Godbid*, and are to be ſold by *M. Pitt*, at the *Angel* over againſt the *Little North Door* of St. *Pauls*. 1673.

INQUIRY

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THE Mystery of Iniquity UNVAILED.

HE *that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*, is an observation which holdeth true of no part of knowledge, so much as of the knowledge of Mankind: It is some relief to him, who knows nothing of foreign wickedness, to hope there are other Nations wherein Virtue is honoured, and Religion is in esteem, which allays his regrates, when he sees Vice and Impiety abound in his Country; but if by travelling or reading he enlarge his Horizon, and know Mankind better, his regrates will grow, when he finds the whole World lyes in wickedness. It argues a cruel and inhumane temper, to delight in beholding scenes of horrour and misery; and certainly none, who either honours his Maker and Redeemer, or is a lover of Mankind, can without sorrow

look on, and see the indignities done to God and his Son Christ, and see the Enemy of the humane race triumphing over the World, with such absolute authority and so much enraged cruelty, and that not only in the dark Regions of it, which the Sun of Righteousness hath not yet visited with his Gospel, but that where Christ should have a Throne, Satans Seat should also be, is justly surprising and astonishing. That almost all Christendom hath fallen from their first love, is what none whose eyes are open can deny; and it is little less evident, that the greater part of it hath made shipwrack, and erred from the Faith; and that the Church, whose *Faith was once spoken of throughout the world*, is now become the *Mother of the Fornications of the Earth*. It is true, the Scriptures warned us of a *falling away*, of a *mystery of iniquity*, of an *Antichrist to be revealed in due time*, and of a *Babylonish Rome, which should bewitch the Earth with her Sorceries*, but should be varnished over with fair colours and specious pretences, so that *mystery* should be on her forehead:

Being

Being then warned of ſo much danger to the Chriſtian Religion, it is a neceſſary (though painful) enquiry to ſee if this *Antichriſt* be yet come, or if we muſt look for another.

But becauſe ſome have ſtretched the Notion of Antichriſtianiſm ſo far, that things harmleſs and innocent come within its compaſs, and others have ſo much contracted it, that they might ſcape free; we are to take a view of the Nature and Deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion, and to conclude from that what muſt be Antichriſtianiſm: It being not only a bare contradiction to ſome branches or parts of the Goſpel (for then every errour or hereſie were Antichriſtianiſm) but a deſign and entire complex, of ſuch opinions and practices, as are contradictory to, and ſubverſive of, the power and life of Chriſtianity: And if we find any ſuch thing to be broached and received in the World, we may with the leaſt hazard of uncharitableneſs, pronounce it to be Antichriſtianiſm, and if it be acted or animated by any Head, he may be concluded Antichriſt.

The Designs of the Christian Religion run betwixt these four heads: The first is, to give us right apprehensions of the Nature and Attributes of God, that we may conceive aright of him, and adore him suitably to his Nature, and according to his Will, and thereby be admitted to a free converse with him, and become partakers of the Divine Nature. How little of God was known by the twinklings of Natures Light, even to the better and wiser part of the World, *Tullies* Books of the Nature of the Gods do sufficiently inform us: But if the Philosophers were so much to seek in it, what shall we expect from the Vulgar? And indeed *Homers Iliads*, and *Ovids Metamorphosis*, were wretched Systems of Divinity; and yet such, and such like, were the sentiments of the Nations about the Godhead. It is true, the *seed of Abraham* were delivered from that darkness, and knew God by his Name *Jehovah*, and had Laws and Ordinances given them by God; yet their Worship was so carnal, and did so strike upon, and affect the senses, that we will

be

be soon satisfied, it was not so sublime and free as became the Spirituality of the Divine Nature, and so was only fitted for the Infancy of the People of God; but by Christ *the mystery that lay hid from ages and generations, was revealed; for he declared the Father, and revealed him*, and taught us to *renounce Idols and vanities, and to serve the living God, commanding all men every where to repent, the times of ignorance wherein God winked at Idolatry, being then over.* That so Mankind being *Gods Off-spring, might feel after him*, and not worship him any more in the blinding grossness of Idolatry, but in a pure spiritual manner; and whereas *the Law came by Moses, by Christ came Grace and Truth.* Grace, in opposition to the severity of the Law; and Truth, as opposed (not to Falshood) but to the Figures and Shadows of *Moses* his Law; and therefore God is to be worshipped in Spirit and Truth, in opposition to the Carnal Ordinances, and Typical Rites, which shadowed out the Truth in the Law.

The second branch of the Christian

Religion is, to hold forth the method of mans reconciliation with his Maker. For the sense of all mankind agrees in this, that sin is an indignity done to God, which deserveth punishment, and cannot be expiated by any service man can do: It was therefore necessary there should be a mean found for incouraging sinners to imbrace a Religious life; of which all had reason to despair, without pardon were offered to penitents, upon the change of their lives. Now this was that, the *Heathen* could not dream how to procure: It is true the *Jews* had sacrifices for expiating of sin, but these could never quiet their consciences; since the common sense of mankind tells, that the blood of beasts cannot appease God. The mystery therefore of the reconciliation of sinners to God, is the proper character of the Christian-Religion: which holds forth to us how the *eternal word* was made man, and endured unspeakable sufferings for the sins of men, even to the death of the Cross; and was raised up by God, and carried to Heaven, where he is vested with all power and

and authority, and by the merits of his death hath a right to grant pardon, give grace, and confer eternal life on all that believe on him; by whom God conveys all things to us, and through whom we are to offer up all our worship to God, he being the *Mediator betwixt God and man.*

The third head of the Christian-Religion is, to teach the perfectest, cleerest and most divine rules, for advancing of the souls of men to the highest perfection of their natures. It is true, noble pieces of morality were acknowledged and taught by the *Heathen* Philosophers: and the Books of the Old Testament have the Doctrin of virtue, purity, humility and meekness laid open very fully: but without derogating from these, it must be acknowledged, that as the Doctrin of Christianity, teacheth all these precepts with clearer rules, and fuller directions; so they were in it recommended by the example of its Author, backed with the strongest Motives, and enforced with the greatest Arguments. In these are the lessons of purity, chastity, ingenuity, humility,

lity, meekneſs, patience, and generoſity; ſo clearly laid down, and ſo fully evinced, that no man who is ſo much a man, as to love theſe things whereby his mind may be improved, to all that is truely great and noble, but muſt be enamoured of the Chriſtian-Religion, as ſoon as he is taught it.

The fourth deſign of Religion is, to unite mankind in the cloſeſt bonds of peace, friendſhip, and charity, which it doth not only by the rules preſcribed for the tempering our paſſions, forgiving of injuries, and loving our Enemies, and by the Doctrin of obedience to thoſe in authority over us, but likewiſe by aſſociating us into one Body, called the *Church*, wherein we are to worſhip God jointly, and to be coupled in one by the uſe of the Sacraments, which are the Ligaments of the Body.

Having thus viewed the great deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion in the ſeveral branches and parts thereof, I ſhall add to this, the main diſtinguiſhing *Characters* of our Religion, which are alſo four.

The

The first is, *its verity*; that it is not founded on the tattles of Persons concerned, nor on the reveries of Dotards, nor received with a blind credulity, being founded on the Authority of the great God, which appeared visibly in those that published it, chiefly in the Person of *Jesus Christ*, who by his Miracles that were wrought in the sight of all the People, even his enemies looking on, and not being able to deny them; but chiefly by his resurrection from the dead, was declared to be the Son of God, which was seen and known by many, who followed not cunningly devised fables, but were the Eye-witnesses of his Majesty, who went in his Name, and published it to the World, confirming it by miracles and mighty wonders, attesting it, notwithstanding of all the persecutions they met with, most of them confirming it with their blood: And this Doctrine was received and believed by the better part of Mankind, though it being contrary to all the interests of the flesh, whose mortification it teacheth, its reception cannot

not be imputed to credulity or intereſt.

The ſecond *Character* of our Religion is, its *genuine ſimplicity* and *perſpicuity*, that all its Doctrines and Rules are clearly and diſtinctly held out to us, not like the Heathen Divinity, much whereof lay in dark *Oracles* in the Books of the *Sybils*, and in other pretended *Myſteries*, which none but the Prieſts might handle and expound. The *Jewiſh Religion* was alſo vailed with Types and Figures, ſo that it was not eaſie to ſee the ſubſtance and truth through all theſe foldings and ſhadows. But the glory of the *Chriſtian Religion*, as to this particular, is nobly laid out by St. *Paul*, in theſe words, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face, as in a glaſs, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The third *Character* is, *the reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion*, it containing none of theſe abſurd incredible things, which abounded among the Heathens; nor of theſe Rites of Judaiſm, the reaſons whereof, beſide the Will of God in

enjoyning

enjoyning them, could not be aſſigned; but both the Doctrines and Precepts of the Chriſtian Religion are fitted for Mankind, and ſo congenial to his Nature, that they well deſerve the deſignation of *reaſonable ſervice*, or rational worſhip, God having made our Souls and them of a piece.

And the fourth *Character* of our Religion is, *its eaſineſs*; *Chriſt's yoke is eaſie, and his burden light*, *Mat.* 11. 30. Wherein we are freed from all the barbarous and cruel Rites of *Gentiliſm*, and from the oppreſſive Bondage of *Judaiſm, which was a Law of Ordinances*, and *a yoke that our fathers were not able to bear*; but that we are called to by Chriſt, is ſo ſimple, ſo eaſie, and ſo plain, that well may we ſay, *his Commandments are not grievous*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 3.

Having given this hint of the Deſign and Characters of the Chriſtian Religion, I hold it not neceſſary to dwell on a further deduction of thoſe generals into more particular branches, nor to make this *ſcheme* of Religion good by any

longer

longer proof, the position I have laid down, being so obvious to the reason of every considering person, wherefore I go on to examine if there be any such *system* of Doctrins or Opinions, among pretenders to Christianity, which tends to the overthrowing and enervating of this whole design, and whose Characters are directly opposite to those I have mentioned, and the less avowed, and the more disguised that Society be, as it is more likely to prevail, since Error and Vice are not so formidable in their own colours, as when veiled with the pretences of Truth and Virtue, so it will better agree with that great Character the Prophecies give of this defection, that it was a *Mystery, and had a Mystery on its fore-head*, Rev. 17. 5.

And here remains the sad part of my discourse, for what lover of mankind can with pleasure either satisfie his own reason, or convince the judgement of others, in a matter the issue whereof is to prove so great a part of the Christian Societies to be *Antichristian* and adulterate, and certainly

tainly if my love to truth, and the honour of thy Redeemer and his Goſpel, and by conſequence a zeal for ſouls, did not engage me to this ſearch, I could eaſily quit the Task, and chuſe more eaſie and pleaſant ſubjects for the exerciſe of my thoughts; but the wiſdom of God having declared it a part of wiſdom to obſerve the characters of the *Antichriſtian beaſt*, I therefore, though not without pain, engage in the ſurvey of it.

And firſt, in the entry it will be a bad Omen, of no good to be expected from any ſociety, that ſhall ſtudy to keep her members in ignorance, and to barr them the ſtudy of the holy Scriptures, which being the Revelation of the whole counſel of God, and written by plain and ſimple men, and at firſt directed to the uſe of the rude illiterate vulgar, for teaching them the Myſteries of Godlineſs, and the path of Life; it is a ſhrewd indication that if any ſtudie to hide this light under a Candleſtick, and to keep it in an unknown Tongue, or forbid the Body of *Chriſtians* the uſe of it (though its na-

tive

tive tendency be to enlighten the under-
ſtanding, and to enflame the will, it be-
ing given out by God for that end) that
thoſe muſt be conſcious to themſelves of
great deformity to that rule, and appre-
hend, that if it were more known, their
Doctrin would be leſs believed, eſpecially
ſince the hardeſt part of the Scriptures
are the writings of the Old Teſtament.
And yet theſe were communicated to all
of that diſpenſation, who were comman-
ded by Chriſt to ſearch them, and who
did educate their Children in them, con-
tinuing that Holy care to a high degree,
even to this day. Now except it be ſaid
that it is fitter all be kept under darkneſs
in the new Diſpenſation, than was in the
Old, no account can be given, for the
zeal is uſed in any Church, to keep their
Children in ſuch Ignorance, and yet
this is a part of the diſtinguiſhing Cha-
racters of the new Diſpenſation from the
old, that light hath appeared in it. Now
all may know how guilty thoſe of *Rome*
are in this: What pains are taken to de-
tract from the authority of the Scrip-
tures:

tures? how they quarrel? ſometimes its darkneſs, ſometimes its ambiguouſneſs, ſometimes the genuineneſs of its Originals, and always complain of its being too much peruſed, and therefore let as little of it be put in *vulgar Tongues* as can be; read it publickly in an unknown Tongue, and permit no private perſon the uſe of it, without allowance from his *Confeſſour*: Of which, though in ſome places the Reformation hath made them more liberal, yet where there is no hazard of that, they betray their averſion for the Scriptures too palpably in all their Writings and Diſcourſes.

But now to purſue my deſign more cloſely, I muſt call to mind the firſt branch of the Chriſtian Religion, which teacheth how God is to be worſhiped in a pure and ſpiritual way; and ſee how far this is contradicted. And here I muſt conſider the Idolatry of the *Gentiles*, which was of two kinds. The one was, when the true God was worſhiped in a falſe manner: The other was, when divine adoration was offered to thoſe who were

no gods. Of the first I shall reckon two kinds, the first was, when an Image or Figure was erected for representing the Deity to the senses, and adoration offered to God through it: In which case, though perhaps the herd did formerly worship the Image, yet their *Philosophers* declared, they meant these only for exciting the senses and imagination, and not for being worshipped; much less that the Deity should be conceived like unto them, as we find both in *Celsus Julian*, and *Maximus Tyrius*. Now this form of adoration is contrary both to the Divine Essence and Command. For God must either be conceived like such an Image, or not: If like to it, then a great indignity is done the Divine Nature, greater than if a Toad or Worm were set out as the Image of a King, to have civil reverence payed to it, since he is of his own Essence Incomprehensible, and Invisible, and so hath no shape nor figure. In a word, it abuses our thoughts of God, when we figure him to our selves. But if we conceive God not like such an Image,

Image; then why is it uſed, except to be a ſnare to the vulgar, who will be ready to think God like unto it? and certain it is, that whatever the more refined or abſtracted Wits may conceive of theſe Images, yet the vulgar offer up their Adorations directly to them, and conceive God to be like unto them.

This Worſhip is alſo contrary to the Divine Precept, who made it one of the ten Commandments, which himſelf delivered to his people, *Exod.* 20. 4. *That no graven Image nor likeneſs ſhould be made to be worſhipped.* And the reaſon given, ſhews the Law was perpetual, *for God is ever jealous of the Glory due to him.* Now what kindneſs thoſe of *Rome* have to this command, may be gueſſed by their ſtriking it out of their Catechiſms, as if it were only an appendix of the firſt: But if we read the whole Old Teſtament, it will furniſh us with large diſcoveries of Gods diſpleaſure at this kind of worſhip, to which the *Jews* were ſo inclinable; *but God would not give his praiſe to graven Images,* Iſa. 42. 8. Now here it is to be

remembred, that the Jewish Dispensation was low and carnal, when compared to that to which we are called: If then this Worship was not allowed of to them, it is much less to be allowed of among Christians.

Another part of the false Worship of the Heathens was, that they believed the Deity and Divine Power was by mystical and magical ways affixed to some Bodies, as the Sun or Stars are; or to some Temples; and to some *Ancilia* and *Palladia*, which they believed came down from Heaven, *Acts* 19. 35. to which they held God to be present and adherent, and therefore worshipped them. And of *kin to this was the Israelites their worshipping the Calf in the wilderness*, *Exod.* 32. for it is clear, they looked on it as their God who had brought them out of *Egypt*, therefore could not possibly be adoring the *Egyptian God that was an Ox*; but the Feast that was to *Jehovah*, and the *Psalm* 106. *vers.* 20. that says, *they changed their glory into the similitude of an Ox*, do shew that they worshipped the true God,

God, though in a falſe manner. Neither is it to be imagined, that *Aaron* the Prophet and Saint of the Lord, though very guilty in this matter, could for all that be ſo criminal, as to make a falſe god: But the moſt ſatisfying account of his fault is, that when he ſaw God in the Mount, *Exod.* 24. 10. God appeared in that figure that was afterwards in the moſt Holy Place, which was to be framed after the pattern ſeen in the Mount. And if ſo, then God appeared between the Cherubims; now the Figure of a Cherub, was the ſame with that of a Calf in its hinder parts, *Ezek.* 1. 7. And if we compare *verſ.* 10. of that *chap.* with *Ezek.* 10. 14. what in the firſt place is called *the face of an Ox*, is in the ſecond called *the face of a Cherub*, which tells us clearly what was the Figure of the Cherub. And therefore *Aaron* ſeeing the People deſired a ſenſible Symbol of Gods Preſence among them, he made choice of that he had ſeen in the Mount about the Divine Glory, and yet all that did not excuſe his fault in the ſight of God.

In like manner, after the Tabernacle and Temple were ſet up, wherein were the Cherubin, when *Jeroboam* revolted, *he ſet up Calves*, 1 *King.* 12. 28, 29. as is probable upon the ſame account, but no doubt continued in all points the Worſhip of the true God, as it was at *Jeruſalem*, as might be proved from many particulars; but the ſin wherewith he *made Iſrael to ſin*, was the worſhipping of the true God by a falſe Symbol. The like account is to be given of the Idolatry of *Gideons Ephod*, *Judg.* 8. 27. And of the worſhipping the *Brazen Serpent*, 2 *King.* 18. 4. where certainly the true God was adored, and yet the People went a whoring from him in that Worſhip.

And here the Title of *whoredom*, given to Idolatry ſo often in the Old Teſtament, is to be conſidered; the importance whereof is, that God by covenanting with his People, is married to them, to be their God; and the conjugal Duty they owe him, is Adoration: When therefore other Creatures have any ſhare of that beſtowed on them, ſpiritual whoredom is committed. Now

Now how ſad the Application of this to the Chriſtian Church muſt be, all may judge, who know how great a part of Chriſtendom worſhip God by Images; and how the adored and incomprehenſible Trinity is painted *as an old man with a child in his arms, and a dove over the childs head; though no man hath ſeen the Father at any time, Joh. 6. 46.* and the Son as God can no more be repreſented by an Image, than the Father; and the Holy Ghoſt, though once appearing in the ſymbolical repreſentation of a Dove, cannot without Idolatry be repreſented and worſhipped under that figure. Neither can any apology be offered for this, which could not with the ſame reaſon have cleared both Jews and Gentiles of Idolatry. And whatever more abſtracted Minds may think of theſe Images, yet none that conſiders the ſimplicity of the Vulgar, the frailty of Man, and his inclination to apprehend all things as ſenſible, can doubt but that the Rabble do really conceive of God as like theſe figures, and do plainly worſhip them. It

is further to be considered, that though the Son of God was Man, yet as Man he is not to be worshipped; and therefore the setting out of Figures and Statues for his Humane Nature (which on the way are no real adumbrations, but only the fancies of Painters) and worshipping these as the Images of the Son of God, is no less Idolatry, than to worship the Father as an Old Man.

And further, the Worship of the Mass is Idolatry, as evidently as any piece of *Gentilism* ever was: For if it be certain that Christ is not in the Hostie, which shall be afterwards made out, then to adore him as there, must be Idolatrous. Neither will it serve for excuse, to say that Christ is truly worshipped as present; and if he be not there, it is only a mistake about the Presence, but no Idolatry can be committed, the Worship being offered to a proper Object, who is God. But if this Apology free them of Idolatry, it will also clear those Heathens, who worshipped some Statues of Creatures, in which they conceived

ceived God was preſent; ſo that they might have pleaded, it was the great and true God they adored, believing him there preſent, as their Fathers had formerly believed. But he were very gentle to Idolaters, who upon ſuch a plea, would clear them of that crime. What then is to be ſaid of that Church, that holds it the greateſt piece of her Religion, to adore the Bread with the ſame devotion they would pay to Chriſt, were he viſibly preſent; who call the Bread God, carry it about in Proceſſions, and worſhip it with all the Solemnity imaginable. And finally, the Worſhip they give the Croſs, is likewiſe an adoring of God under a Symbol and Repreſentation. And thus we have ſeen the *parallel of Rome-Heathen, and Rome-Chriſtian*, runs but too too juſt.

But the next kind of the Heathens Idolatry, was their worſhipping of others beſide God, whom they held of two ranks: Some that were ſo pure, that they never dwelt in Bodies: Others they judged to be the Souls of deceaſed Men, after

after their death acknowledged and honoured with divine honour. And this kind of Idolatry was first begun at *Babylon*, where *Ninus* made the Statue of his Father *Belus* be set up, and worshipped it: And from him all these lesser gods were called *Belim*, or *Baalim*. Now concerning these, the *Heathens* believed that they were certain intermedial powers, that went betwixt God and men, by whom all good things were conveyed to mortals, by whom also all our services were offered to the gods. Thus the Nations *had gods many, and lords many*, 1 Cor. 8. 5. And these lesser *Deities* or *Damons* they adored, by erecting Statues to them about their burial places, where they built Temples for them, and worshipped them. And from this hint of *Babylons* being the Mother of this kind of Idolatry, we may guess, why the Apostacy of that City, which in St. *Johns* dayes, *did reign over the Kingdoms of the earth*, Rev. 17. 18. is shadowed forth under the name of *Babylon*, to hold out that the corruption it was to fall into, was to be

of

of a kind with that begun in *Babylon*; and the Character of the Whore doth likewiſe agree well with this.

Now if we compare with this the worſhip of Angels and Saints in the *Roman* Church, we ſhall find the parity juſt and exact. For after the converſion of the *Roman* Empire, it is not to be denied but that in order to the gaining of the *Heathen* World to a complyance with Chriſtianity, the *Chriſtians* did as near as was poſſible accommodate themſelves to the Heatheniſh cuſtoms: And therefore in ſtead of their gods, they ſet up the *Dæmon* and *Baal-worſhip*, to the Apoſtles and other Saints and Martyrs; which *Theodorat* doth moſt ingeniouſly acknowledge to have been ſet in the ſtead of their gods. They became afterwards ſo exact in the parallel, that as the Heathens had of theſe leſſer gods for every Nation, ſo there was a Saint appointed for every Nation: St. *Andrew* for *Scotland*, St. *George* for *England*, St. *Patrick* for *Ireland*, and many more for other Nations: And as every houſe among the *Heathens* had

their

their houſhold god, ſo every perſon was taught to have a *tutelar Saint* and *Angel*. And as among the *Heathen* there were gods for all Trades, for all Sickneſſes, and for every Virtue; ſo in Antichriſtianiſm there were Saints for every Diſeaſe, for every Profeſſion, and for all the Graces. And as the *Heathens* built Temples for them, ſo did alſo *Babyloniſh Rome*. And here an odd remark is in my way of this conformity, that the *Pantheon at* Rome *dedicated in* Auguſtus *his time to* Cybele *the mother of the gods, and to all the gods, was afterwards conſecrated to the Virgin and all the Saints*. And as the *Heathens* offered Prayers, made Vows, obſerved Days, brought Preſents, uſed Proceſſions in honour to theſe leſſer gods, and worſhiped their Statues and Images: So all this by degrees crept into *Rome-Chriſtian*, as might be branched out in more particulars than the nature of ſo ſhort a diſcouſe will allow of. It is true, the worſhip of Images came not in before the *eighth Century*; but after that time it engaged all that received it into a high degree of madneſs, for advancing that Heatheniſh

piece of Worſhip. And ſhall I here tell what is known to all who have ſeen the forms of that Church? how you ſhall find their Churches all over dreſſed up with Images and Statues, gorgeouſly apparelled, and well adorned; where the poor vulgar are lying proſtrate before them, ſaying their Devotions, and perhaps waſhing the feet of their Shrines with their tears, and with great affection kiſſing the hem of their Garments: And if through the tricks of the Prieſt, the Image ſeem to nod or ſmile on them, (which is not unfrequent) with what joy do they go away, as if ſome Angel had ſaluted them from Heaven. And here it were too long to reckon up the Abominations of this Saint-worſhip which are offered to the *Virgin*, with the Blaſphemous Titles given her, and Prayers made to her; *as if ſhe were more merciful and gentle to ſinners, than her bleſſed Son. What ſhall I tell of the whole Pſalms turned to her?* The words of *Goddeſs* and *Lady*, being put in the place of *God* and *Lord*: And that from the *eleventh Century*, in which

which the form of the numbering their Prayers by Beads was begun, *ten Go to the Virgin, for one to God.* How many more Worship her, then do her Son? How many more Churches are built to her, than to her Son? And how many *Pilgrimages* are made to her Shrines and Reliques? And thus I think little doubting will remain, that the worship of the *Baalim* begun at *Babylon*, is now set up in the Christian *Rome.*

Now how contrary this is to the Divine Nature, common reason may suggest: as also to the exaltation of the Person of Christ, *Isa.* 42. 8. *God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another.* We have but *one Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. who by his most precious blood shed for us, purchased the honour of being Mediatour betwixt God and Man: And therefore *Christians* ought only to make mention of his Name. Beside the great evil of Idolatry is, that it debases the soul of the profane worshiper, *for like them are all they that trust in them*, *Psal.* 115. 8. It leads

leads away the mind from that inward free and ſpiritual converſe, and fellowſhip with God, to which the Goſpel invites us; and carries it out into an external, ſenſible, and dead Religion: It ſtifles the power of true Piety, making it die out in formal and ſtupifying ſuperſtition: And the Plagues which Heaven pours out on thoſe ungodly worſhipers, are heavy, and great. A black Roll of them in the end of the firſt *Chap.* to the *Romans*, which were the Confectaries on their not glorifying of God, as God, which is branched out into the two kinds I have diſcourſed of. The firſt is, *v.* 23. *they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible man*, &c. And the ſecond is, *v.* 25. *who worſhipped and ſerved the Creature more than* (or beſides) *the Creator.* And it would raiſe horrour in ſober minds to tell how much the ſin of the fleſh, particularly *the ſin of* Sodom, which is firſt reckoned in that diſmal Catalogue, abounds with theſe of this ſpiritual *Babylon.*

And will the poor diſtinctions of *Dulia*

and

and *Latria* ſave them from this guilt? Alas! theſe are parts of the Myſtery by which they would vail their Abominations; but their nakedneſs is not hid with this thin vail. For we ſee how ſimply all religious Worſhip offered to Creatures diſpleaſed God: Neither did the Prophets tell the *Iſraelites* that a kind of Worſhip called *Dulia*, or *Service*, might be payed to Creatures, but the *Latria*, or *Adoration*, was only proper to God; indeed they dreamed not of this ſubtilty; *and when St.* John *offered to fall down before the Angel, he forewarns him not to do it, as being not only his fellow-creature, but his fellow-ſervant*, *Revel.* 19. 10. by which all that Proſtration for worſhip is declared unlawful, and what can be called Adoration, if to offer Prayers, to make Vows, to ſing Hymns, to obſerve Days, and to build Churches, be not ſuch? Theſe nice diſtinctions which the Schoolmen have deviſed, will ſerve in no ſtead in the great day, *when Gods jealouſie ſhall burn like fire* againſt all that have diſhonoured him,

by

by this profane worshipping of Creatures. And it is certain, that however some speculative People may have distinct Notions of these kinds of Worship, yet the Vulgar, in their Practice, make no difference at all, but place all their trust in them, fly to them in their troubles as to their refuge and strong hold; whereby that faith and confidence which is only due to God and his Son is abated, so much of it being bestowed on Creatures. And what a baseness of Mind doth it discover, for Men, to whom God hath revealed so much of the Riches of his Grace, and hath allowed constant and free access to his Throne, with the largest encouragements and assurances of being heard and accepted by him; and who hath given Mankind a Mediator, who in the likeness of our flesh did express the greatest and freest love imaginable, dying for us, and being now our Advocate and Intercessor with his Father; that instead of conversing immediately with God and Christ in the Exercises of Devotion, we should betake

our selves to a dead and livelesse invocating of those, of whose hearing us we can have no assurance, and in which there can be no comfort nor true joy found.

So much of the Object of Worship, the Manner of it is next to be considered: We observed before, that God called us in the Gospel to a lively and spiritual Worship, and this was first in opposition to the forceries of the Gentile Worship, and next to the heavy yoke of the Jewish Bondage. How much of Sorcery and Enchantments was used in Heatheniſm, every one that gives account of their Forms do mention; but indeed all they used was nothing, if compared to the Enchantments of the *Roman* Church; and first of all, can any thing look liker a Charm, than the worshipping God in an unknown Tongue? in which the Worshipper is capable of no converse with God by these parts of Worship, which he doth not understand. Next, [illegible] muttering so large portions of the [illegible]ship, chiefly in the Office of the [illegible] doth it look like but the mumbling

bling of Charm? But shall I here tell of *the charming of water of Salt, of wax candles, for driving away of Devils?* Shall I next tell of *the christening of Bells, the hallowing of Oyl, the touching of Beads, the touching of little Pebbles*; which shall have a virtue against Sickness of all kinds, Thunders and Lightnings, and Temptations of the Devil? Shall I next tell of *the consecrating of Roses, Agnus Dei's, Medals*, and the like? Or shall I tell of *their Exorcisms and Charms for driving out Devils*, with all the strange actions used in them? Shall I mention the *Reliques*, and all the virtues believed to be in them, yea and derived from them? Shall I mention their *privileged Altars*, their *Jubilees*, the *Prayers* upon which *Indulgences* are granted, their *solemn Processions*, together with all the small tricks are used in every part of their Worship? All this should be endless. These things cannot but eat out the power of Religion, and introduce a dry and empty *skeliet* of enchanted Actions, instead of that lively Image of God, which the Christian Religion designs to restore in us.

In a word, shall I tell how the Sacramental Actions are polluted by the superfœtation of so many new Rites, whereby they are wholly changed from their original Simplicity. In Baptism, *instead of washing with Water in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; how have they added so many adulterated Rites? the Child must be thrice blown upon, then a Charm used for turning the Devil out of him; he must be anointed with holy Oyl, and hallowed Salt must be put in his mouth, sanctified Garments also must be put on him, and a holy Wax-candle in his hand; and the Priests Spittle must be gently stroaked upon him. Whether doth all this look like the Simplicity of the Spouse of Christ, or the Attire of the Harlot? And in the other Sacrament, a great deal more adoe is made, so that any indifferent Spectator, who were not warned of it, would swear it were a solemn piece of Pageantry; the Priest must come in cloathed with rich embroide-

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red Vestments, then he goes to the Altar, sometimes reads on the one side, then he turns to the other; Often he bows, and kisses, and crosses; sometimes single, sometimes thrice repeated crosses: Most of the Office he mutters, though what he says is all alike understood, being in an unknown tongue: Sometimes he turns to the People, and gives them a short *Barbarian* Benediction: Then he goes on till he come to the five wonder-working words: And then instead of the Bread, which the force of these words hath driven to nothing, behold a god, to be worshipped by the Spectators. And after the adoration, the god is to be devoured by the Priest, which made the *Arabian* say, *he never saw a Sect of Religion so fooliſh as the* Christians *were, who with their teeth devoured the god they had adored.* Certainly all this looks so like a piece of extravagance, especially if the simplicity of the first institution be considered, that many will doubt if it be possible that such worship can be received in any corner

of the Christian World. And by these hints, though a hundred more could be instanced, let it be guessed what is become of the simplicity of the *Christian* Religion, when it is so vitiated in all the parts and branches of it: And whether that genuine sincere spirituality appear in it, which the Gospel holds forth to the world. These things having a native tendency for leading away the soul from attending upon God, in her acts of worship; which is the only thing for which external worship is to be continued in, that in it we may jointly concur to converse with our Maker. If from this I should reckon up all the tricks are used in secreter worship, what stories should I tell of the pattering over the Beads, of the multiplying little unintelligible Prayers, the using of Penances, some whereof are ridiculous for their gentleness, and others of them are as formidable for their horrour, and fitter for the *Priests of Baal*, or the *worshipers of Diana Taurica*, then for those that worship the living God with joy and gladness of heart?

Now

Now by the performance of these, the simple deluded people imagine themselves reconciled to God, and secured from his wrath: And so go about them meerly in the opinion of a charm.

But I must next shew how the multiplicity of the Jewish rites was also brought in upon Christendom, though Christ came to set us at liberty from that *Pedagogy*, which was made up of Ordinances and lifeless Precepts, *that could not make the doer thereof perfect*: nothing being enjoyned in the Christian Religion, but that which was of it self easie and proper for the great design of purifying our souls. Now such as have brought in a yoke of ordinances, that have no tendency to the cleansing of our souls, but oppress us with their tyrannical burdensomness, being both heavy, and numerous, must be looked on as the introducers, of a new Judaism, for oppressing the Christian world; what a heap of new superadded forms have the High Priests of *Rome* brought upon these who stoop to their tyranny? And how much sanctity do they place in

them; enjoyning severer censures on the violation of these, than on the greatest transgressions against either the Moral or Positive Laws of God: How many holy days have they instituted? How much distinction of meats, of fasting, and abstinence? And how like are their Jubilees and Pilgrimages to the Jubilees and yearly trotting up to *Jerusalem*, which was among the *Jews*? In a word, there is not a piece of worship about which there is not a greater appendage of vain pompous, and withall burdensom Ceremonies, then were among the *Jews*. Shall I here mention the five superadded Sacraments, to the two instituted by Christ, with all the rites belonging to each of them, or recount all the rites in their multifarious ordinations? Shall I tell of the laying up the Bodies when dead, and of the forms of their Burials? The burning of Lamps in the cleerest day, together with the Incense that perfumes the worship, which are clear pieces of antiquated Judaism. In a word, no part of the parallel holds more exactly, than that

that *they are zealous of the traditions of their Fathers, whereby the Commandments of God are made of none effect*; and *that they honour God with their lips; when their hearts are far form him*: And *worship him in vain, teaching for Doctrins the Commandments of men*, Matth. 15. 8, 9.

And hitherto I have diſcourſed upon the firſt limb of Antichriſtianiſm, and have diſcovered too evident indications of the contradictions is in it, to the firſt branch of the deſign of Chriſtianity; whereby the worſhip of God is partly adulterate, and partly ſmothered by a heavy and troubleſome load of uſeleſs and lifeleſs performances; which muſt needs lead out the ſoul from an inward attending on God, or free converſe with him.

The ſecond branch of Chriſtianity is, the holding forth that Myſterious contrivance of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, *for reconciling the world to himſelf, by his dear Son; whom he gave to the death for us, and alſo raiſed*

raiſed up, making him both Lord, and Chriſt: Whoſe glory and dignity is vulgarly branched out in theſe his three Offices of *Prophet, Prieſt*, and *King*. By the firſt of which, he revealed the Father, and his whole counſil to mankind, in plain and ſimple diſcourſes, afterwards committed to writing by the faithful eye and ear-witneſſes of his Majeſty. His Prophetick office therefore is chiefly acknowledged, in our grateful receiving theſe diſcoveries, and our ſtudying to adjuſt both our Faith and Practice to that unerring rule. But can any thing be more contradictory to this, than to keep the knowledge of theſe writings from Chriſtians, to accuſe their darkneſs and defects, and to apprehend great danger from their diligent peruſal, to vilify that ſacred ſtudy, preferring the lame and lifeleſs diſcourſes of men, to the words of eternal wiſdom? For we muſt conſider, that our ſtudy of the Goſpel, is of the ſame nature with a perſonal following of Chriſt, when on earth, to ſee his miracles, and hear his doctrin, the ſame is alſo to be

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ſaid of the Acts and Epiſtles of the Apoſtles. Now to bar the Vulgar from this, is to hinder them to hear and ſee Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as if that were a Priviledge reſtricted to Church-men. What ſhall be then ſaid of theſe, *who call the Scriptures a Nuſt of Wax, the Sourſe of all Hereſies, a Book written not on Deſign, but upon particular Emergents*, and do aſſert its incompleatneſs, unleſs made up by the Traditions of the Church? Is not this to add to the Words of that Book, and to accuſe the faithful *witneſs* of unfaithfulneſs? But worſe than all this is held by theſe, who will have all the Authority of the Scriptures to depend on the Church, which muſt be believed in the firſt place.

But here a great difference is to be made betwixt the teſtimony of a *witneſs*, and the authority of a *Judge*; the former is not denied to the Church, and ſo the *Jews* had the Oracles of God committed to them; but that doth not prove the Authority of their *Sanhedrim* infallible, or ſuperiour to Scripture; and in this caſe more cannot be aſcribed to the Chri-

Christian Church, than was proper to the Jewish in our Saviours time. But further, if the Scripture be to be believed on the testimony of the Church, then upon what account is the Church first believed? It cannot be said, because of any testimony in Scripture, for if it give authority to the Scriptures, it cannot receive its authority from their testimony. How then shall it be proved that the Church must be believed? or must it be taken from their own word? and yet no other reason can be given to prove the Church infallible. For to say that they have continued in a Succession of Bishops from the Apostles days, concludes nothing, unless it be first proved that the Doctrine of the Apostles was of God; otherwise, the *Mahometan* Religion is as much to be believed, since for many Ages a Succession of Priests have believed it. Further, the Greek Churches drive up the Series of their Bishops to the Apostles days, as well as the Roman; why then should not their Authority be likewise acknowledged infallible? In fine,

must

muſt the Vulgar go and examine the Succeſſions of the Biſhops, and judge about all the dubious Elections, whether the Conveyance have been interrupted or not? Certainly were this to be done, it were an impoſſible Atchievement, and harder than the ſtudy of the Originals of both Teſtaments: Therefore the Vulgar muſt ſimply believe the Authority of the Church on her own teſtimony, which is the moſt abſurd thing imaginable, and this to every individual, will reſolve into the teſtimony of their Prieſt. Behold then a goodly Foundation for building our Faith upon!

Chriſts Prophetick Office is alſo invaded, by the pretence of the Churches Infallibility in expounding Scriptures; for if this be granted, the whole Authority will be devolved on the Church, for by this Doctrine ſhe may teach what ſhe will, and were the Scripture evidence never ſo full to the contrary, yet whatever wreſted Expoſition ſhe offer, though viſibly contrary to the plain meaning of the words, muſt be believed. But with whom

whom this Power and Authority is lodged, is not agreed to among themselves; some yielding it to the High Priest of the Church, when in his Chair, others to the great *Sanhedrim* of *Christendom* in a *General Council*, others to both jointly; but all this is asserted without proof, for that of Christs, *of telling the Church*, *Mat.* 18, 17. so often repeated by them, is meant of particular offences, and so is restricted to the case of differences among Brethren, and relates not to points of Doctrine. Besides, the Context of these Words doth clearly shew them applicable to every Parochial Church, and yet their Infallibility cannot be asserted. So it is clear, that Christ doth only speak of a jurisdiction for quieting of differences among the Brethren.

That of *the gates of Hell their not prevailing against the Church*, *Mat.* 16. 18. proves not the pretence of Infallibility. And indeed the Translation of that place deserves Amendment, and instead of *hell*, that Word is to

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be rendred *grave*; ſo that the meaning of the Phraſe is, Death (which is the mouth and gate through which we paſs into the Grave, and is ſo uſed by *Greek* Writers) ſhall never prevail againſt the Church; that is, the Church ſhall never die.

Neither will that of *the Spirit of truth leading out into all truth*, Joh. 16. 13. advance the Cauſe a whit, ſince that promiſe relates to all Believers, and it is a part of the happineſs of the new Diſpenſation, that all in it ſhall be taught of God. And the promiſe of *founding the Church on St.* Peter, *Matth.* 16. ſaith as little; for ſuppoſe the Rock on whom the Church were to be built, were St. *Peter* himſelf, which I ſhall not much contravert, that is not peculiar unto him; ſince *we are all built on the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets*, and on the *twelve foundations of the new Jeruſalem are written the names of the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb*: but what will that prove for a ſeries of the Biſhops of *Rome?*

And finally, *for the keyes of the King-*

Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 16. 19. their being given to St. *Peter*, that ſaith no more, but that he was to open the Goſpel, which is uſually called, *the Kingdom of God*, or *of Heaven* in the New Teſtament. Now the uſe of keys being to open the door, this was peculiar St. *Peters* honour, who did firſt publiſh the Goſpel both to Jews and Gentiles, and in particular did firſt receive the Gentiles into the new Diſpenſation. But this hath no relation to the Biſhops of *Rome*, nor to the pretended infallibility of that See.

That which hath the faireſt appearance of reaſon is, that if there be no abſolute unerring Court on earth, for deciding of controverſies, there ſhall be no end of them; but every private man may upon the pretence of ſome ill underſtood place of Scripture, break the unity of the Church, and ſo the peace of the Church is in hazard of being irrecoverably loſt: But how ſpecious ſoever this may appear, it hath no weight in it: For it is certain that vice, as well as errour, is de-

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ſtructive of Religion, and it will be no imputation on our Religion, that the one be no more guarded againſt, than the other is; if then there be no authority for repreſſing Vice, but the outward diſcipline of the Church, it is not incongruous there be no other authority for ſuppreſſing of errour, but that ſame of the Diſcipline of the Church. It is certainly, a peece of humility, for a man to ſuſpect his own thoughts, when they lye croſs to the Sentiments of the guides and leaders of the Church: But withal, a man ought to be in all he does, *fully perſwaded in his own mind*, and we are commanded *to try the ſpirits, and not to believe every ſpirit*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 1. Now reaſon being the chief excellency of man, and that wherein the Divine Image doth mainly conſiſt, it were very abſurd to deny man a rational judging and diſcerning of theſe things wherein his eternal intereſt is moſt concerned. Beſides the nature of Religion, it being a thing ſutable to the powers of the ſoul, ſhews that a man muſt have a conviction of the

truth of it on his mind, and that he cannot be bound in contradiction to his own apprehensions, to receive any opinions meerly upon the testimony of others.

If to confirm all this, I should add all can be brought from History for proving General Councils to have erred in matters of Faith, or that Popes have been Hereticks, or that they have been anathematized as such, by other Popes and General Councils, I should be too tedious. But in end, how shall the Vulgar know the definitions of Councils, or the Decrees of Popes? Or must they be blindly determined by the Priests assertion? Certainly, this were to expose them to the greatest hazards, since they are not suffered to found their Faith upon the Scriptures: Nor doth the Church reveal her Doctrines to them, so that their Faith must be resolved upon the bare Testimony of a Priest, who is perhaps both ignorant and licentious. And by this we may judge to what a pass the souls of the people are brought by this Doctrine. In a word,

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we are not the servants of men; nor bound to their Authority; for none can be a Judge, but where he hath power both to try and to coerce: Now none but God can either search our hearts, or change them; for as no humane power can know our thoughts, so neither can it turn them, which are not in our own power, much less in the power of others; therefore our Consciences can, and must only fall within Gods jurisdiction: And since the renovation of the Image of God consists in Knowledge, and Religion designs an union of our souls to Divine Truth, that we may freely converse with it, it will follow, that all these pretences of absolute authority and infallibility in Teaching, are contrary to Christs Prophetick Office, who came *to reveal the Father to us*.

The second of Jesus Christs Offices, was the Priestly, without which the former had never been effectual; for had we known never so perfectly the Will of God, without a method had been laid down for reconciling

sinners to him, it was in vain to think of Religion, since nothing sinners could do, was able to appease God, or expiate sin; but this was fully done by the Sacrifice of that Lamb of God, *Who became sin for us, and bare our sins on his own Body, In whom we have redemption, even forgiveness of sin through his Blood*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. 1 *Pet.* 2. 24. *Ephes.* 1. 7. If then any have derogated from the value of this satisfaction, they have offered the utmost indignity to the highest love; and committed the crime of the greatest ingratitude imaginable; who would requite the most inconcieveable love, with such a Sacrilegious attempt: But, how guilty are they of this, who would set the Merits and works of men, in an equality with the Blood of God: as if by these, we were justified, or owed our title to Glory, to our own performances, whereas we are taught by the Oracles of God, that *by grace we are saved, that God only hath made the difference betwixt us and others, and that he hath freely chosen us in his Son Christ Jesus*, *Ephes.* 2. 5. 1 *Cor.* 4. 7.

And

And alas! where are we, or what is all we do, that it can pretend to the loweſt degree of Gods acceptance, without he freely, both help us in it, and accept of us for it? ſo that when he rewards us for our ſervices with Eternal Life, he freely crowns his own free gifts to us. For when we conſider how great a diſproportion there is betwixt our beſt Services and Eternal Glory, when we alſo remember how all our good actions flow from the Principles of Divine Grace freely given, but withal, reflect on the great defects and imperfections that hang about our beſt performances, we will not be able to entertain any thoughts of our meriting ought at the hands of God. And certainly, the deeper impreſſions we have either of the evil of ſin, or the goodneſs of God; we will be further from a capacity of ſwelling big in our own thoughts, or of claiming any thing on the pretenſions of juſtice or debt. It is true, this Doctrine of *Merit* is ſo explained by ſome of that Church, that there remains no ground of quarrelling it; except

for the Terms sake, which is indeed odious and improper (though early used by the Ancients in an innocent sense.) But many of that Church acknowledge, there can be no obligation on God by our Works, but that which his own promise binds upon him; which none, who believe the truth of the promises of the Gospel, can question; but still we must remember that we owe all to the love of Jesus, and nothing to our selves: which as it is the matter of the *Allelujahs* of glorified Saints, so should be the subject of our daily acknowledgements; wherefore, we must abominate every thing that may seem to detract from this. But alas! were all this zeal, many of that Communion own for Merits and good Works, meant for the advancing a Holy and Spiritual Life, it would carry a good apology with it, and its noble design would very much qualify the severity of its censure; but when these good works, which for so many ages were highly magnified, were the building of Churches, the enriching of Abbeys,

beys, Pilgrimages, and other trifling and voluntary pieces of Will-worſhip, advanced for the Secular intereſts of the Church; what ſhall be ſaid of all that pains was uſed by the Monks for advancing them; but that they were willing to ſell the value of the Blood and Merits of Chriſt, for advancing their own Secular intereſts, and diviſed practices? Alas! how far are theſe from that Holineſs and Sanctity, which muſt qualify us for the Kingdom of God, and the inheritance of the Saints. And to end this matter, let me add one thing, which is moſt evident to all who have obſerved the methods of the directours of Conſciences in that Church, that with whatever diſtinctions this matter be varniſhed over among them; yet the Vulgar do really imagine they buy and ſell with Almighty God, by their undergoing theſe Laws of the Church, and penances impoſed by their Confeſſour: Which as it nouriſheth the life of Pride and Self-love, ſo it detracts from the value they ought to ſet on the blood of Chriſt, as their only title to Heaven and Glory.

And to this, I muſt add that diſtinction of the *temporary and eternal puniſhments* ſin deſerves: The latter whereof they acknowledge are removed by the Blood of Chriſt; but the former muſt be expiated by our ſelves; either by ſufferings in this Life, or thoſe we muſt endure in *Purgatory*; unleſs by the Popes charity we be ſecured or delivered from them. Now, how contrary this is to the value we are taught to ſet on the Blood of Chriſt, all may judge. *Epheſ.* 2. 15, 16. *By Chriſt peace is made, we are reconciled to God, he preſents us to the Father without ſpot and wrinkle.* And much more of this nature meeting us in Scripture, declares how plenary his ſatisfaction was; nothing being left undone by him, for removing the guilt and demerit of ſin. And what comfortleſs Doctrine this is, we may ſoon apprehend, how it takes away that joy in God, at the approaches of death: Since there is ſuch a hazard of direful miſeries following. Now, this was no ſmall part of the myſtery, by

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which the World was brought under their dominion; and therefore great pains was taken for rooting the belief of it deep in all mens hearts, many Visions and Apparitions were vouched for its proof, and all the Lives of the Saints, that were written for divers Ages, were full of such fabulous narrations; some Souls were said to be seen standing in burning brimstone to the knees, some to the middle, some to the chin, others swimming in *caldrons of melted Metal*, and Devils pouring the Metal down their throats, with many such affrighting Stories.

But for all this, the proof from Scripture was only drawn from one wrested place of the Apostle *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12, 13, 14, 15. who saith, *That in the day of the Lord, such as built upon the foundation of Christ, superstructures of wood, hay, and stubble, should be saved, because they kept the foundation, yet so as by fire.* But this was only a proverbial form of speech, to express the risque they run to be such, as of one that escapes out of a fire; such proverbial speeches being usual in Scripture, as that of

of the Prophet, *Zach.* 3. 2. *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* Or of the Apostle, *Jude* 23. *Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* And any considering person will, at first view, see how slender a foundation this was for the superstructure built upon it.

But the way was contrived for preserving Souls from, or rescuing them out of Purgatory, will discover what were the inducements of advancing the belief of it with such zeal, which was thus framed: It is believed by that Church, that beside the Commands that necessarily oblige all Christians, there are many Counsels in the Gospel, in order to the attaining a higher pitch of perfection, such as the counsels of poverty, and chastity, or the like; and they teach, that such as did not obey these, cannot be said to have sinned; but on the other hand, those who have obeyed them, shall not want a reward, by their so *supererrogating* beyond what was strictly bound upon them, and the reward of them is their meriting both for themselves and others, an exemption

ption from the pains of Purgatory. And of all these Merits, there is a *common treasure of the Church*, wherein for good manners sake the Merit of Christ is the chief Stock; and this is committed to the Successors of St. *Peter*, to whom the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are believed to be given, who can communicate of that spiritual Treasure as they will, either for preserving Souls from Purgatory, or for delivering them out of it. This could not but work wonders for the exaltation of the Papal Dignity, when he was conceited to be honoured of God with so high a trust. This was also made an engin for advancing all the Papal Designs, for upon any quarrel he had with any Prince, the Popes proclamed a *Croisade*, promising exemption from Purgatory to all who hazarded their Lives for the Service of the holy Church. And the contrivance of Purgatory being universally believed, this could not fail to draw great numbers about his Standards. And by this means he brought most Princes into that servile subjection to him, under which

which they groaned for many Ages. Another practise yet more base and sordid was, the selling of Indulgences and Pardons for money; certainly here was *Simon's crime* committed by the pretended Successors of him, who had of old accused him, *that thought the gift of God might be purchased with money*, and thereupon did cast him out of the Church. It were endless to tell the base Arts, and blasphemous Discourses of the Monks who were sent through the World to sell these Indulgences, which in the end proved fatal to that Church, since the excessive magnifying of them did first provoke *Luther* to examine their corruptions. It is true, they will not hear of the harsh word of *selling Indulgences*, but disguise it with their giving them to such as will offer Alms to the Church; but really, this whole contrivance is so base, so carnal, and so unlike the Spirit of Christianity, that to repeat it, is to refute it: Here was a brave device for enriching the Church, when the making great Donations to it, was judged so effectual for deli-

delivering out of Purgatory. Who would not out of love to his Friends Soul, if he believed him frying in these flames, give liberally of his Goods; but much rather would a man give all that he had for his own security, especially when on his death-bed he were beset with persons who were confounding him with dismal apprehensions, and thus trafficking with him *for the exchange of the Soul.* Hence sprung the enriching of Abbeys and Churches, for every Religious Order hath its own peculiar Merits, which they can communicate to one of their Fraternity: If then a dying man had gained their favour so much, that he was received into their Order, and died wrapped in one of their Frocks, then was his Soul secure from the *grim Tormentors* below. And what an endless heap of Fables had they, of Souls being on the brink, or in the midst of the flames, and of a sudden snatched out.

But now all this Trade hath quite failed them, therefore Indulgences are fallen in their Rates, and in stead of them, there

there are Prayers to be used, and especially to be said before *privileged Altars*, or at such times, or before such Reliques, that it is no hard work for any among them to ransome the Souls of others, or to preserve their own. In a word, doth not all this debase the Spirit of true Religion, and expose it to the jealousie of Atheists, as if it were a contrivance for advancing base, and secular Designs. And doth it not eat out the sense of true Piety, when the Vulgar see the Guides of Souls making such shameful Merchandise of them, and doing it with such respect of persons, that if a man be rich enough, he is secure; *whereby our Lords blessing of the poor, and pitying a mourn the rich, is reversed.* But above all, what indignity is by this done to the Blood of the Son of God? And how are the People carried from their dependance on Him, and their value of His Sufferings, by these Practices!

Another Art not very remote from this, for detracting from the value of Christs death, and the confidence we should

ſhould have in it, is, the Prieſtly Abſolution, wherein after the Sinner hath gone over his ſins without any ſign of remorſe, and told them to the Prieſt, he enjoins a penance, the doing whereof, is called *a ſatisfaction*; and the Vulgar do really imagine, that the undergoing the penance, doth fully ſerve for appeaſing Gods wrath againſt ſin; but as ſoon as the Prieſt hath enjoined his penance, without waiting that they obey it, he lays his hand on their head, and ſays, *I abſolve thee*; and after this, they judge themſelves fully cleanſed of ſin, and that they may receive the Sacrament, had their former life been never ſo bad. It is true, the practice of the Prieſts in their ſlight penances, and haſted abſolutions, and promiſcuous allowing of all the holy Sacrament, is condemned by many in that Church, who complain of theſe Abuſes with much honeſt zeal; but theſe complaints are ſo little regarded, that their Writings are condemned, and the Corruption continues unreformed. Now what can take off more from the value of

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the Death of Christ, than to believe it in the power of a Priest to absolve from sin? All the power of the Church being either Ministerially to declare the absolution offered in the Gospel, upon the conditions in it, or to absolve from the scandal which any publick trespass hath given. It was counted blasphemy in Christ, when he said, *Thy sins are forgiven thee, Mar.* 2.5,10. of which he cleared himself, *from the power was committed to the Son of Man on earth, to forgive sins*; which shews it to be blasphemy in all others to pretend to absolve from sin, it being an invasion of his Prerogative.

To this I might add the scorn put on Religion by many of the penances enjoyned for sin, such as the abstaining from flesh for so many days, the pattering over so many Prayers, the repeating the *penitential Psalms*, the going to such Churches, and such Altars, with other ridiculous Observances like these, which cannot but kill the Vitals of true Religion, and lead away Souls from these earnest Applications to Jesus Christ for pardon

pardon and renovation. And who can have any ſad apprehenſions of ſin, who is taught ſuch an eaſie way of eſcaping puniſhment?

I confeſs in this, as in all other parts of Religion, the Maſters of that Church have ſo contrived things, that their Doctrines might, *according to the fable of the Manna, taſte pleaſant in every mans reliſh*; for if any be grave and melancholy, then ſilence, ſolitude, and retirement are enjoyned them; if their tempers be more fiery and ſullen, ſevere corporal mortifications and diſciplines are tasked on them, ſuch as cruel and perhaps publick whipping, or other unſpeakable auſterities, with which the Lives of the modern Saints are full; but if one be of a more jolly temper, who deſires Heaven at an eaſie rate, then ſome trifling penance ſhall ſerve turn. Theſe are a few of their Arts for diverting Souls from flying unto Jeſus, as to the ſure and ſafe refuge from the Fathers wrath, in whom only we can find ſanctuary, and whom the Father hath ſent into the World to ſeek and ſave

lost Sinners. Now whether the Priests in the injunction of easie penances, and giving absolution, do not violate the Prerogative of Jesus, and insensibly debauch Souls from that affectionate and grateful Duty they owe their Redeemer, into their trifling methods and appointments, I refer it to all who know them.

Another opposition made to the Priestly Office of Christ is, their conceit of the sacrifice of the Mass, which they believe is a formal expiation of sins, both for the living, and dead, who are in Purgatory: Christ once offered himself up for taking away sin, which he did by that one Sacrifice, and this is by the Apostle stated amongst the differences which are betwixt the Sacrifices of Moses, which were to be daily and yearly renewed and repeated, whereas Christ offered one Sacrifice in the end of the world, so that there was no need of more, Heb. 10. 1, 2, 3, 12, 14. Now, to imagine that the Priests going through the Office of the Mass, and his receiving the consecrated Elements, can have a virtue to expiate the sins of others,

others, especially of the dead, is a thing so contrary to the most common impressions, that it will puzzle a mans belief to think any can credit it. And yet this is one of the Master-pieces of the Religion of that Church. It is true, in a right sense, that Sacrament may be called a Sacrifice, as it was by the Ancients, either in general, as Prayers, Praises, and Almsdeeds are called so in Scripture; or as it is a Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ; but to imagine the Action hath an expiatory force in it, is a visible derogation from the value of Christs Death; and all the value is in any outward Sacramental Action, can only be derived into the Soul of the Receiver; but it is absurd to think one mans action can be derived to another; and it clearly appears from the institution of the Lords Supper, that its end was the joint communicating of Believers, which is perverted manifestly by the practice of these Priests, who communicate in name of the Spectatours.

Finally, what a derogation is it from

the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt, one branch whereof is his Interceſſion, to join Saints or Angels with him in that work, nay, and prefer them to him? Which will be found too true, if the Office of the Virgin, and the Prayers offered to her, be compared with thoſe offered to her Son. Did Chriſt by the Merits of his Paſſion acquire this honour at ſo dear a rate? and ſhall we for whom he ſuffered, rob him ſo injuriouſly and ſacrilegiouſly of his honour, and beſtow it on theſe who are our fellow-ſervants?

But having touched this in the former part of my Diſcourſe, I advance my Enquiry to the oppoſition given the Regal Office of Chriſt: And firſt, how contrary is it to the glory wherewith even his humane Nature and Body is refulgent in Heaven, to believe, that *five words*, muttered out by the Prieſt, ſhall have the virtue to produce his real and glorified Body, inſtead of the annihilated Elements of Bread and Wine, and yet under their accidents and appearances? This is a new and ſtrange kind of humiliation, if true,

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by which he who is now cloathed with Glory, muſt be every day expoſed under ſo thick, ſo dark, and ſo contemptible a covering, as are the reſemblances of Bread and Wine. What low thoughts of his Perſon muſt it breed in ſuch minds as are capable of believing this contrivance?

Again, he, as King of his Church, hath given her Laws and Precepts, to whoſe obedience ſhe is obliged, to which none can add, without they acknowledge another Head, and whoſe obligation none can untye or diſpenſe with; for Chriſts dominion conſiſts in this authority he hath over our Conſciences, which he hath vindicated into liberty, by delivering us from the bondage of corruption. If then any pretend a power of obtruding new articles on our Belief, or obligations on our Conſciences, theſe muſt be confeſſed to be injurious to the Dignity wherewith Chriſt is veſted. What ſhall then be ſaid of him, who pretends an authority of diſpenſing with, and diſſolving the obligation of Oaths, of

dissolving the Wedlock-bond, of allowing Marriage in the forbidden degrees: And as for their additions to the Laws of Christ, they are innumerable. And here what I mentioned last, calls me to mind of a pretty device, to multiply the forbidden degrees of Marriage, yea, and add the degrees of spiritual Kindred, that is, of kindred with our God-fathers or God-mothers in Baptism, which is done upon no other design, but to draw in more to the Treasure of the Church, by frequent Dispenses. If I should here reckon up all the additions which by the Authority of that Church are made to the Laws of Christ, I should resume all that I have hitherto alledged, they being visible additions to the Doctrine and Rules of the Gospel, and imposed with such unmerciful cruelty, that an *Anathema* is the mildest of the spiritual Censures they thunder against such as comply not with their tyranny, and a faggot would be its civil Sanction, were the secular Powers at their devotion. I do not deny but there is an Authority, both in the Civil

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and Eccleſiaſtick Powers, of enjoyning things indifferent, but no Authority beſide Chriſts can reach the Conſcience. Beſides, if theſe indifferent things ſwell ſo in their number, be vain, pompous, and uſeleſs, and be impoſed without all regard to the tender ſcruples of weak Conſciences, they become tyrannical; and ſuch as do ſo impoſe them, diſcover their affecting a tyrannical and lordly dominion over Conſciences, and that they prefer their own Devices to the ſimpler Methods of Chriſt, and the plainer and eaſier Rules of his Goſpel.

But one inſtance of their abrogating the Laws of Chriſt is more ſignal, in their violating the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, wherein, though he inſtituted it under both kinds, and did ſo diſtribute it, with the expreſs command *that all ſhould drink of it*, yet they preſumed, *notwithſtanding of that, and though the Primitive Church diſtributed it in both kinds; which is confeſſed in their Canon*, to ſnatch the Cup from the Laity, and engroſs it to the Clergy. Now it is to

be considered, that the value of the Sacramental Actions flowing only from their Institution, the first Appointment should be most religiously observed in them. Besides, the universal extent of Christs word, *drink ye all of it*, which was not used in the distribution of the Bread, hath a particular mystery in it, to guard against the foreseen corruption of that part of it; and the reason given in the distribution of the Cup, shews, it must reach to all that need the Blood of Christ *for the remission of sins*, which not being restrained to the Priests, shews, that the Cup, without a direct opposition to the Mind and Command of Christ, ought not to be taken from the People; and any that will read the goodly reasons given for this Sacriledge, wil see what a low account they have of the Commands of Christ, when, upon such trifling pretences they will violate them. And with how much cruelty they backed this invasion of Christs Authority, the History will declare, they beginning it with a perfidious

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burning of two witneſſes who oppoſed it at *Conſtance*: And occaſioning ſo much War and Blood-ſhed againſt thoſe who adhered to the rule of the Goſpel, in this matter, and refuſed to ſtoop to their Tyranny.

But I advance to another invaſion of Chriſts regal authority, commited by him who pretends to be the *Univerſal Biſhop* of the Church, and to have authority over all Church-men; whom he makes ſwear obedience to him, and looks on them but as his Delegates: It was unluckily done of *Gregory the great*, to be ſo ſevere on this head, as to condemn the title of *Univerſal Biſhop*, *as Antichriſtian*: But little dream'd he in how few years his Succeſſour would aſpire to that height of ambition. Now by this pretence, all theſe Officers whom Chriſt hath appointed to Rule and Feed his Church, are turned out of their authority, and made ſubject to him: And with how much pride he treads on his Fellow-Biſhops, the Hiſtories of many ages do declare. It is true, at firſt, as being Biſhop of the Imperial

rial City, the Bishops of *Rome* were highly esteemed, but Pride and Ambition, began soon to leaven them; yet they were for the first four ages, looked upon, by the other Bishops, but as their Fellow-Bishops, and by the Decrees of two General Councils, the Bishops of *Constantinople* were in all things, except the precedency, make equal to them: And by the Decree of the Council of *Nice*, other *Metropolitans* are levelled with them. And here I must tell of a *shameful forgery of three Bishops of* Rome, *who one after another, would have obtruded on the African Churches, a Decree, allowing of appeals from them, to the* Roman *See, as if it had been made at* Nice; *which they of* Africk *rejected, and upon tryal, found it to be none of the appointments at* Nice, *but a Decree of the Council of* Sardice.

But by degrees the Bishops of that City got up to the height they are now at; and not content with their usurping over their Brethren and Fellow-Church-men; their next attempt was upon Princes, who deriving their autho-

autlirity from *Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, by whom Kings do reign*, it was an invasion of his power to attempt againſt his Vice-Gerents on Earth. But the Popes made no bones of this; for being now held *Christs Vicars on earth*, with other blaſphemous titles, as *Vice-God*, yea, and *Lord God*, they thought their power was limited, as long as Kings and Emperours were not even in temporals ſubject to them. And therefore from the days of *Pope Gregory the 7th*, they pretended to a power of depoſing Princes, diſpoſing of their Dominions to others, and diſpenſing with the Oaths of fidelity their Subjects had ſworn to them; and it was eaſie for them to make Crowns change their Maſters, as they pleaſed: For there were always other ambitious Princes ready for their own ends to invade the Dominions of theſe depoſed Kings, upon the Popes warrant, and the generality of the People were ſo poſſeſſed with the Popes power of releaſing ſouls from Purgatory, and from the puniſhments due to ſin, that they were eaſily prevailed

vailed upon to follow his thunders: And by that time the Popes had ſwarms of Emiſſaries of the begging Orders, who under ſhews of auſtere Piety, gained much reverence and eſteem in the World; and ſo got all ſubjected to the Papal Tyranny. Now, ſhould I inſtance this in particulars, I ſhould tranſgreſs the limits of a ſhort Diſcourſe, by a long Hiſtory; but the lives of *Gregory* the 7th *Alexander* the third, *Boniface* the 8th and *Julius* the ſecond, to mention no more, will ſufficiently convince any who will be at the pains to read them, as they are written by thoſe who lived in that Communion. And *Matthew* of *Paris* will at length inform his Reader, how much, and how often *England* ſmarted under this Tyranny.

And all this is ſo far from being denied, that it is defended avowedly by not a few of the *Canoniſts* and *Jeſuits*, and is a Doctrine dearly entertained in the Court of *Rome* to this day, as appeared from the late attempt of Pope *Paul* the fifth, upon *Venice*: But the World is

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now a little wiſer, than to be carried away by theſe Arts, and therefore that pretence is laid to ſleep, till haply the beaſt be healed of the wound was given it at the *Reformation*.

But I cannot leave this particular, without my ſad regrates, that too deep a tincture of this ſpirit of Antichriſtianiſm is among many, who pretend much averſion to it; ſince the Doctrine of reſiſting Magiſtrates, upon colours of Religion, is ſo ſtiffly maintained, and adhered to, by many, who pretend to be highly reformed, though this be one of the Characters of the *ſcarlet-coloured whore*. But thus far have we gone through the ſecond part of Antichriſts Character, and have diſcovered too clear indications of a diſformity to the ſpirit and truth of the Chriſtian Religion, in all the branches of the Honour and Worſhip due to Jeſus *the only Mediator of the new Covenant*.

From this I proceed to the third part of my enquiry; which is, the oppoſition made to the great deſign of Chriſtian

an Religion, for elevating the souls of men into a *participation of the divine Nature*, whereby the soul being inwardly purified, and the outward conversation regulated, the World may be restored to its *Primitive Innocence*: And men admitted to an inward and intimate fellowship with their Maker. The first step of this renovation, is *repentance*; *for God commands men every where to repent, and repentance and remission of sins* are alwayes united: And this being an *horrour at sin upon the sense of its native deformity, and contrariety to the Law of God, which makes the soul apprehend the hazard it hath incurred by it; so, as to study by all means possible to avoid it in all time coming*; nothing doth prepare the mind more for faith in Christ, and the study of a new life, than repentance; which must needs be previous to these. But what devices are found to enervate this? sins must be divided into *venial* and *mortal*, the former deserving only some temporal punishment, and being easily expiated by some trifling piece of seeming

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ing Devotion, and hereby many ſins are ſtruck out of the Penitents conſideration: For who can have a great apprehenſion of that which is ſo ſlightly expiated. And this may be extended to the eaſie Pardons, given for acknowledged mortal Sins: For he who thinks that God can be appeaſed for them, with the ſaying by rote, ſo many Prayers, cannot poſſibly have deep apprehenſions of their being either ſo diſpleaſing to God, or ſo odious in themſelves. But ſhall I to this add their aſſerting, that a *ſimple attrition, which is a ſorrow flowing from the conſideration of any temporal evil, God hath brought upon the ſinner, without any regard had either to the vileneſs of the ſin, or the offence done to God by it*; that this (I ſay) can ſuffice for juſtifying ſinners, and qualifying them for the Sacrament, whereby the neceſſity of contrition and ſorrow flowing from the principle of the love of God, is made only a high degree of perfection, but not indiſpenſibly neceſſary: In the next place, all theſe ſeverities they enjoyn for Penances, do but tend

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to nouriſh the life of ſin, when ſinners ſee a trade ſet up by which they can buy themſelves off from the wrath of God. To this, is to be added the Doctrine of Indulgences, which is ſo direct an oppoſition to Evangelical repentance, as if it had been contrived for diſpoſſeſſing the World of the ſenſe of it.

That which is next preſſed in the Goſpel for uniting the ſouls of mankind to God, *is that noble ternary of Graces, Faith, Hope, and Love, by which the ſoul reſts in God by a holy affiance in him, believing the truth of his Goſpel, expecting the accompliſhment of his Promiſes, waiting for the full fruition of him, and delighting in his glorious perfections, and excellencies.* Now how much all this is ſhaken by theſe carnal and groſs conceptions, the Roman Doctrine offers of God in their Image and Maſs-worſhip, and by their Idolatry to Saints is apparent? Are they not taught to confide more in the *Virgin, or their Tutelar Saints*, than in the holieſt of all? Doth not the fear of Purgatory damp the hopes

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of future bleſſedneſs? And finally, what impious Doctrine hath been publickly licenſed and printed in that Church of the degrees of the love we owe to God? Some blaſphemouſly teaching, *that we are not at all bound to love him*, others mincing it ſo, *as if they were afraid of his being too much beloved.* In a word, there is an impiety in the Morals of ſome of that Church, particularly among the *Diſciples* of *Loyola*, beyond what was ever taught amongſt the worſt of the Heathen Philoſophers, which hath been fully diſcovered by ſome of the honeſter and more zealous of that communion. And though theſe corruptions have not been avowed by the head of that Church, yet by their being publickly vented, by the deaf ear he gives to all the complaints againſt them, and by the conſtant careſſes and priviledges he heaps upon that Order which teacheth them, he diſcovers either his great ſatisfaction in that corrupt Doctrine, or that upon the account of other intereſts, he is content to betray the ſouls of Chriſtians into

the corruption of such impious and ungodly leaders, since the Order that hath owned all these corruptions is yet possessed of the Consciences of the greater part of them that own that Communion, they being the universal Confessours. And since they license the publick venting of so much corrupt Doctrine in printed Writings, what reason have we to suspect their base compliance with sins in their more secret and unknow Practisings, with such poor deluded souls, as trust to their conduct; of which many proofs are brought by others of that same Church?

But I pursue my enquiry into the other traces of the Antichristian corruption, of the purity, and power, of our most holy Faith: Solemn Worship, and secret Devotion, are the great means of uniting souls to God, and of deriving the assistance of his Spirit and Grace to us; but when these are performed in an unknown tongue, How uncapable are they of reaching that end? And the Doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacraments, for conveying

ing of grace *by the work wrought*, looks like a deſign againſt all ſerious preparation for the worthy receiving of them; ſince by that doctrine, a man, be he never ſo ill prepared, yet is ſure of their efficacy; for if his Prieſt abſolve him, and he have *a ſimple attrition for ſin*, without any thing of the love of God, he is by their Doctrine and Conduct qualified for receiving worthily, were his heart never ſo much united to ſin, or averſe from all Devotion, or application to Divine matters. And what complaints ſhall be here made of theſe who teach, that the ſure way of gaining the favour of God, which they phraſe by *the keyes of Paradiſe*, is to ſay the *Ave*, *to bid the bleſſed Virgin good-morrow every day*, or *to ſend our Angel Guardian to ſalute her?* or finally, *to wear a Meddal or Roſary in devotion to her, though from the firſt time we begin to wear it, we never again think of her*. Doth not all this look like a conſpiracy againſt the power of Godlineſs?

But ſhall we next conſider the Moral Law, which though Chriſt ſaid, *he*

came not to dissolve, but to fulfil, *Matth.* 5. 17. Yet they have found out distinctions and Doctrines to destroy it. It is true, what may be said here, cannot so directly, as to every particular, be charged on the Roman Church, since, it hath not been decreed by Pope, or Council; but when prophane *Casuists* have printed Doctrines, which tend to the subversion of the most common principles of virtue, and morality, and these are licensed according to the rule of that Church: And for as publick as they are, and for all the censures and complaints others have passed upon them, yet they continue without any censure from the chair of *Rome*, it is a shrewd presumption that they are not unwelcome to that See: Though for good manners sake they have given them no other owning, but a connivance, joyned with an extraordinary cherishing of that School which vents them.

Two general Doctrines they have, which at two stroaks dissolve all the bonds of Virtue. The one is, *the Doctrine of probability*; the other, *of good*

good intention. By the first, they teach, that if any approved Doctor of the Church have held an opinion about any practical thing, as probable any Christian may with a safe conscience follow it, were it never so much condemned by others; and did it appear with the blackest visage: And by this it is, that scarce there is a sin which may not be safely hazarded on, since there have been of the approved Doctors of that Church, who have made a shift by distinctions, to represent the worst actions, not only as probable, but as really good. The next Doctrine is, of good intention, *whereby they teach a man to commit the grossest Leger demain with God and his own conscience imaginable; by which he may act any sin he will, provided he intend not that, but some other good design or motive:* And any that will read the *Provincial Letters*, or the *Mystery of Jesuitism*, and compare their Citations with the Authors, whence they take them, will soon be satisfied of the truth of this.

We have already seen how that

Church violates the two first Commandments, by her Idolatry: Whereby in opposition to the first, she worships Saints and Angels, with those acts and expressions of adoration only due to God. The second is also palpably violated by their Image-worship, and adoring God under sensible and external representations. The third is made void by the Popes pretending to dispence with Oaths, and to annul their obligation, as also by their Doctrines of *equivocation and mental reservations*, in all Oaths, both assertory, and promissory, besides the impious Doctrines of some Casuists, that justifie the *prophaning of Gods Sacred Name, in rash and common swearing*. Their contempt of the fourth Precept is not denied, it being usually among them a day of mercating, dancing, and foolish jollity: Many among them teaching, that to hear Mass that day, doth fully answer the obligation for its observance. Their contempt of the fifth follows, upon the Doctrine of the Popes power, of deposing Princes, and freeing the Subjects

jects from their obligation to them; by which they are taught to rebel, and *reſiſt the Ordinance of God.* Beſides, their Caſuiſts allow it as lawful *to deſire the Parents death, provided it be not out of malice to him, but out of a deſire of good to themſelves: That they may enjoy their inheritance, or be rid of their trouble.* Yea, ſome of their impious Caſuiſts ſay, *that Children may lawfully intend the killing of their Parents, and may diſown them, and Marry without their conſent.*

For the *ſixth Command*, their Caſuiſts do generally allow, *to kill in defence of Honour, Life, or Goods*, even though the hazard of loſing them be not near and evident, but afar off, and uncertain: And they teach, that a man is not bound to ſtay till another ſmite him, but if he threaten him, or if he offend with his words, or if one know that he hath a deſign upon his Honour, Life, or Goods, he may with a good Conſcience prevent, and kill him. And this they extend to all ſorts of perſons, both Secular and Religious; allowing it to Sons againſt

their Fathers. And they leave it free to them to execute this by whatever means they judge most proper, whether by force, or surprize, or by the service of others, if they dare not attempt to kill by their own hands; which they stretch to the case of one who knows another guilty of a crime, and intends to pursue him for it; and they allow the guilty person, if he know no other way of escape, to kill him who intends his accusation, that he may thereby preserve his life; in order to which they also allow it lawful to kill the witnesses that may prove the crime.

As for the *seventh Command*, modesty cannot name their polluted Doctrines about it: They barred the Clergy the lawful use of Marriage, but did allow them Concubinate, and *the publick licenses given to base houses in the Popes dominions, prove that See a Mother of Fornications, even in the letter*; the Religious Houses being likewise full of Irreligious intanglements, into a course of life, which many times they are not able to bear; but being restrained from the *honou-*

rable Ordinance of God, many of theſe houſes have proved either neſts of filthineſs or of ſecret impurities; which it ſeems by the rules of confeſſion, and the queſtions their Confeſſours puts to them, are known to abound among them. And any that have read theſe, will confeſs, that it defiles a chaſt mind to read them; but what muſt it be to ask them, eſpecially at thoſe of a different Sex? Shall I alſo here mention the frequent diſpenſing with Marriages within degrees forbidden, and their as frequent diſſolving of that ſacred knot, though *(as if they had reſolved on a contradiction to all the rules of the Goſpel) they refuſe to diſſolve the bond on the account of adultery, which Chriſt hath made the only ground than can juſtifie the diſſolution of it?* But ſhall I add to this, the baſe impieties, of which not only theſe of purple and ſcarlet Livery among them have been notoriouſly guilty, but even the villanies of ſome *that have worn the Triple Crown?* As I ſhould grow too tedious, ſo I muſt needs tell things, which to a pure mind were both

both nauseating to write and to read. Those that have been in that Spiritual *Babylon*, know, that is *a Sodom, even in the letter*, none being more guilty of that crying Wickedness, than those that bear the character of *religious* or *sacred Orders*. And what shall we think of the Scarlet Fraternity, that produced *a Monster that attempted Heaven it self, by writing in defence of that impiety, which it avenged by Fire and Brimstone*, and yet had no Censure passed on him for it! Whereas for the least tincture of *Calvinism* or *Lutheranism*, he had been condemned to the Fagot. Some of them do also teach, that Fornication is not forbidden by the Laws of Nature, and only by positive Precepts, so that it may be dispensed with.

For the *eighth Command*, those profane Casuists have made such shifts for it, that none needs to be guilty of Theft; for they teach it *to be no sin to take that from another which he made no use of, but may well want, and that in such a case, he who steals, is not obliged to restitution*: Others

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of them teach, *That he who ſtole a great ſumm, is not obliged to the reſtitution of the whole, but only of ſo much as may make the theft not notable:* But they teach, *that ſmall thefts, even though often repeated, are but Venial ſins,* which is an excellent Doctrine for warranting Servants inſenſibly to purloin their Maſters goods: They alſo teach Arts of eſcaping juſt Debts, beyond all the ſubtilties of falſe Lawyers; which the Jeſuites themſelves have often put in practice, and have found out Arts for juſtifying oppreſſive Uſury, defrauding of Creditors, ruining of Commerce, and making havock of our Neighbours goods, without Injuſtice.

For the *ninth Command*, though it be ſo contrary to Nature, that the worſt of men count it a reproach to be charged with Falſhood, and Lying; yet they have favoured it avowedly: For by their Doctrines of Equivocating and uſing Mental reſervations, the greateſt Falſities in the World may be averred and ſworn without ſin: And the value they ſet on a ſtrict obſervance of promiſes, and candor

dor in them, appeared at *Constance*, where a whole Council required *Sigismund* the Emperor, to burn *John Huss*, and *Jerom* of *Prague*, though he had given them his safe Conduct; for they taught him, *that faith was not to be kept to Hereticks.* Another such like trip of one of the Popes, *proved fatal both to* Ladislaus, *and the Kingdom of* Hungary, *at* Varna; *where they breaking the Truce they had sworn to the Turk, upon the Popes warrant, were signally punished for their treachery.* The Doctors of the fore-mentioned School do also teach, that he who hath born false witness in a matter that may cost another his life, is not bound to retract it, if that retractation may bring great evils upon him. They also propose methods for suborning Witnesses, and falsifying of Writs and Records, without any sin; and that all this may be done to defame a person with some horrid imputation, who is led as a Witness to prove any thing against one, that thereby he may be cast from witnessing.

And as for the *tenth Command*, they have

have ſtruck out all the firſt motions of the mind to Evil, from being accounted Sins; and by their diviſion of Sins into Venial, and Mortals, they make ſure enough work of this Command, that it ſhall not be broken mortally. It were an endleſs work to go and make out all theſe particulars, of their diſſolving the Moral Law by clear proofs: but he who deſires ſatisfaction in that, will find it in the *Provincial Letters*, or the *Morals of the Jeſuits*.

But if we paſs from the Law, to the Goſpel, we ſhall find they have made no leſs bones of it. We are all over the Goſpel called to be heavenly minded, to deſpiſe the World, and to ſet our affections on things above; and particularly, Church-men are taught not to ſeek the riches, ſplendor and vanities of a preſent World; which was moſt vigorouſly enforced by the example of Chriſt and his holy Apoſtles. But how contrary to this is that Religion, whoſe great deſign is, the enriching and aggrandizing of the Teachers and Paſtours of it, chiefly

chiefly of him who pretends to be the ſupreme and ſole Paſtor? I need not here re-mind the Reader, of the Trade of Indulgences, by which that Church roſe to its riches and pomp; nor need I tell what a value they ſet on outward actions of piety, the chief of theſe being the enriching of Churches, and Abbies; and how theſe were commended to the World as the ſure means of attaining Eternal life. Shall I add to this, the viſible and groſs ſecularity and grandeur, in which the Head, and other Prelates of that Church do live? The Head of it being in all things a temporal Prince, perpetually buſied in intrigues of State, and ballancing the *Princes of Europe*, and chiefly of *Italy*; and what baſe and *Simoniacal* practices abound in that Court, all who have written of it with any degrees of ingenuity, do acknowledge, all things are venal there: Money being able to raiſe the baſeſt and unworthieſt to the higheſt promotions; the *Cardinals* are alſo named either upon the Intereſts of Princes, and chiefly of the two great Crowns;

Crowns; or to make the *Popes Nephews* have a greater ſtroke in the next *Conclave*; or upon ſome ſuch carnal account. And perhaps, for good manners ſake, a Scholar, or a perſon famous for Devotion, may get a red Hat, but ſuch are alwayes the leaſt eſteemed in the Colledge; all affairs being governed by the *Popes Nephews*, or the *Protectors of the Crowns*. And who ſhall expect that ſuch a company of ſecular, ignorant, (I mean in matters of Religion,) and oftentimes licentious men, ſhould be the great *Sanhedrim*, by whoſe advice all that belongs to Religion muſt be managed? Theſe muſt be likewiſe the Electors of the *Pope*, when the See is vacant; whom they chooſe out of their own number, who is always elected by the prevailing Intereſts of one of the Crowns, or by the Faction of the former Popes Nephews. And what Caballings, what beſpeaking of Suffrages, and what impudent *ambitus* is commonly practiſed in the Elections of Popes, is well enough known, nor can it be denied: Now, what man of common

common ſenſe can imagine, that a Pope thus elected by Simoniacal Arts, and carnal Intereſts, can be *Chriſts Vicar on Earth, or have the Holy Ghoſt always affixed to his Chair, that he ſhall never erre in any of his Decrees?* Truly, he that can believe this, may believe any thing that is groſs and abſurd. Is not the whole frame and contrivance of that Court turned ſo entirely Secular, that not a veſtige of the Character of a Church, or of Churchmen, remains? And to this, ſhall I add all the ſplendor of their Apparel, the ſtate of their Proceſſions, and the ceremonies of their Coronation, and how they wear a Triple Crown? which being ſo well known to all whoever were at *Rome*, need not be deſcanted on by me. But the mention of the Crown calls me to mind of the literal accompliſhment of that, of *Myſtery, being on the forehead of the Whore*; ſince the word *Myſtery*, was for a great while the inſcription on the front of their Triple Crown, though it be now altered; which being proved by others, I may not ſtay to make

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it good. From this I ſhould deſcend to the Cardinals, Biſhops, and Abbots, and ſhew how ſecular they are become; all their deſign being to engroſs the power, and monopolize all riches: which contagion is alſo derived into the inferiour Orders of the Clergy, who by the magnifying of their Images, Saints, and Reliques, uſe all the Arts they can deviſe for enriching of themſelves and their friends. And even theſe Orders that pretend to mortification, and abandoning the world, and talk of nothing but their poor and auſtere manner of life, yet have poſſeſſed themſelves of no ſmall part of the riches and glory of the world. It is true, there is a young Brotherhood among them, which though the youngeſt yet hath outſtripped the elder, and made them ſtoop to it, and ſerve it. And what baſe and ſordid ways that ſociety hath purſued, for arriving at the higheſt pitch of greatneſs, and riches, and how ſucceſsfully they have managed their deſigns, is ſufficiently cleared, what through the zeal of ſome of the honeſter of that

Communion, what through the envy of other emulating orders, all these things do fully prove how unlike that Church is to the poor, and pure simplicity of Christ and his Apostles, and of the first ages of the Church?

If we further examine the characters of Evangelical purity, we have them from the mouth of our *Saviour*, when he commands us to learn of him, *for he was meek and lowly in heart*: and he made it the distinguishing badg of his disciples, that *they loved one another*. Now for humility, it is true, the Head of that Church calls himself *the servant of the servants of God*; but how far such humility is from his design, his aspiring pretences do loudly declare. All the world must stoop to him; not only must his fellow-Bishops swear obedience to him, and become his Vassals, but the Kings of the earth must be his footstool, and all must pay him that servile homage of kissing his foot; an ambition as insolent as extravagant. His power must be magnified with the most blasphemous Titles of *his being God*

God, our Lord God on earth Omnipotent; with a great deal more of ſuch ſervile Adulations, offered to him from the Paraſites of that Court. In a word, a great part of that Religion, when rightly conſidered, will be found on deſign contrived and abetted, for exalting him to the higheſt degrees of inſolence: but ſo many proofs of this were already upon other occaſions hinted, that it is needleſs to go over them again: and that ſame leven, levens the whole lump of their Clergy; who all pretend that by their Eccleſiaſtical character they are only ſubject to their Head, and ſo enjoy an immunity from the Civil Authority, be their crimes what they may be. And an in-road on this pretence of late, from the *State of Venice*, when they ſeized two Churchmen that were highly guilty, drew out ſo much of their moſt holy Fathers indignation, that he thundered againſt them, and finding the weakneſs of the *ſpiritual ſword*, reſolved to try the edge of his *temporal one* upon them; in patrociny, partly of theſe Villanes, and partly of the cove-

touſneſs of the Clergy, to which the Senat had ſet a ſmall limit, by a decree; but finding they were like to prove too hard for him, *he was willing to put up his ſword, rather then to kill and eat, as one of his Cardinals adviſed him.*

Shall I with this alſo tell the inſtances of the ambition of Cardinals, who from their firſt original of being Presbyters of *Rome*, have riſen up to the height of counting themſelves the companions of Kings, and in their habits affect a Princely ſplendor, *but have unluckily choſen the Liveries of the Whore; for they wear Scarlet as the Biſhops do Purple, the foretold colours of the Whores Garments.* Shall I next ſhew to what a height of pride the exaltation of the Prieſtly dignity among them hath riſen? as if it were equal, nay preferable to the condition of Princes. The Prieſts giving abſolution, is a ſure device to make his power be much accounted of, ſince he can forgive ſin. The gorgeous and rich apparel they wear in worſhip, ſerves alſo to ſet off their dignity. And what a goodly device is it, that

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their ſpittle muſt make one of the ſacred Rites in Baptiſm? *Certainly that muſt be eſteemed a marvellous holy creature, whoſe very excrements are ſo ſacred.* Their engroſſing the Cup to themſelves from the people, was another trick for raiſing of their eſteem: but above all things, their power of tranſmuting the ſubſtance of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Chriſt, by uttering five words, was a marvellous device, to make all the world admire them, who can ſo eaſily, and every day work a miracle, compared to which, all the miracles of the Goſpel may paſs for ordinary actions. What a great piece of wonder muſt ſuch a man be held to be, who can thus exerciſe his authority over the very perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding of all the glory to which he is now exalted? And it was no contemptible Engine for that ſame deſign, to poſſeſs the people with a belief of the Prieſts offering in the Maſs an expiatory Sacrafice, for the ſins both of the dead & living; which proved a Stock for them to trade on, both for their ambition and covetouſneſs, and from

these evidences we may infer, how little of the humility of Christ appears in the Church, from the highest to the lowest.

The next branch of the Evangelical Spirit is, meekness and charity, which leads me unto the consideration of the fourth design of the Christian Religion, which was the uniting of mankind under one head, and into one body, and this it designed to effectuate, not only by these sublime Precepts of the highest love, and the outmost extent of the pardoning of injuries, and of returning them with the best offices of love and prayer; which the blessed Author of our faith did enact; but by the associating of the faithful into one Society, called the *Church*, which was to be united with the closest Bonds of Brotherly love, and Charity; and was to be governed by Pastors and Teachers, who should *feed the flock with the sincere milk of the Word*; and was also to be cemented together by the Ligaments of the holy Sacraments, *by which, as by joynts and bands they are both united to their head, and knit together.* Now we are from these things

things to conſider what oppoſition that Church we are now conſidering, gives to this branch of the end of Chriſtianity.

And firſt, whereas the Goſpel *pronounceth us free, and that we are no more the ſervants of men, but of God*, if any attempt upon that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, he changeth the authority of the Church into a tyrannical Yoke; much more, if all the new articles of belief, and rules for practice, be impoſed under the ſevereſt certificats. But here we are to conſider, that all theſe things which that Church hath impoſed on all of her Communion, for which we withdrew from her, are additions to our faith; for in this we mainly differ from that Church, that whatever we acknowledge, they acknowledge likewiſe, but with a great many additions, we believe the Scriptures are a rule for Chriſtians, and they believe the ſame; but they add traditions, and the authority of the Church to the Scriptures. We believe that God is to be worſhipped ſpiritually, they believe the ſame; but add that he may be worſhipped by Images and

ſenſible Figures. We believe Chriſt to be the Mediator betwixt God and Man, they believe the ſame; but add to this the interceſſion of Saints. We hold that God and Chriſt are to be worſhipped, they hold the ſame, but add Saints and Angels to our worſhip. We believe Heaven and Hell to be the ſeveral States of the future life, they believe the ſame; but, add Purgatory betwixt them, to the day of Judgment. We believe Baptiſm and the Lords Supper to be the Sacraments of the new Covenant, they believe the ſame; but add five more. We believe Chriſt is ſpiritually and really preſent in the Lords Supper, this they believe; but add the unconceivable Tenent of his corporal preſence. In a word, it might be inſtanced in many other particulars, how they have driven us from their Communion, by their additions to the truth, and ſincerity of the Goſpel, which they have adulterated by their Inventions; and not only have they impoſed all theſe things, but thundered out *Anathema's* on all that queſtion them, and have ſo wreathed all their fopperies, with

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that main and fundamental article of their belief, of the infallibility of their Church; that it is impoſſible to hope for their recovery, till they renounce that Principle which is ſo dear to them. For if their Church be infallible, then in no matter of faith or practice can ſhe decree amiſs, and therefore the lawfulneſs and ſanctity of all her decrees muſt be maintained with an equal vigor and zeal; for if in one of them ſhe ſtep aſide, her infallibility is for ever gone. And by this we may ſee to how little purpoſe it is to treat of accomodating matters with that Church, ſince there is no poſſibility of our union with them, without we turn over entirely to them: for they cannot part with one of their errors, without they firſt renounce that which is the deareſt of them all, to wit, the unerring authority of their Church. How cruel then is that Church, which addeth the ſevere ſanction of an Anathema to all her decrees; even about the moſt trifling matters? and about things that are by their Confeſſion of their own natures indifferent. And a conſectary to this is,

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that cruel opinion they hold, *that none can be ſaved out of their Communion*: pretending there is no Salvation without the true Church, which they reſtrict to theſe who are under the obedience of the Roman Biſhop; and this is what they uſually frighten all with.

But it is to be conſidered what the true notion of the Church is, that ſo we may ſee through this frightful Vizar. The Church then is *a Society of Chriſtians united in the ſame faith, for worſhipping of God jointly.* And another definition of a Church cannot be proved from Scripture; for the Church being called the Body of Chriſt, its union with him as its head, is held forth *by the Apoſtle in theſe words, Col.* 2. 19. *The head Chriſt, from whom the whole body by joints and bonds, having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* From which words, we ſee what conſtitutes a man a member of the true Church; which is firſt, his union to Chriſt as his head, together with a dependance on him for growth and nutriture: and next, his being knit to all others who

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are thus united to Christ; which is first the inward union of divine Charity, by which he loves all who cleave to Christ as their head: and next, his associating himself with them in outward visible acts of worship, which every Christian is bound to do, with all that worship God in Spirit and truth. But if a Society of Christians do visibly swerve from Christ in many great and signal contradictions to the honour due to his Person, and to the obedience due to his Laws, and do grosly adulterate the worship, so that communion cannot be had with that Church, without departing from the head Christ, then it can be no departing from the Church, to adhere to Christ and his true worship, and to separate from the corruptions are brought in upon the Christian religion. If then it appear that the Church of Rome hath departed from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel, in so many great and main points, these who attempted the reforming her to her first purity, and finding that not to be hoped for, did unite among themselves for serving and worship-

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ing God aright, cannot be charged with ſeparation from the true Church.

But by that cruel Tenent of theirs, they breed up all their Children in the greateſt uncharitableneſs imaginable, condemning all who cannot believe their ſtrange Doctrines, or concur in their unhallowed worſhip. Thus they are the Schiſmatiques who have departed from the true Church, and who force from their Communion all who adhere to it: but this cruelty reſts not in uncharitable cenſures, but hath extended it ſelf to as much bloody and barbarous rage, as ever ſprung from Hell; for all the cruelty of the heathen Perſecuters, cannot match the practices of that Whore, that hath been ſo often *drunk with the blood of the Saints, and of the Martyrs of Jeſus.* What enraged cruelty appeared againſt the poor *Waldenſes*, for the ſeparating from their Corruption? how many of all Sexes and Ages, were cruelly butchered down by the procurement of the Rulers of that Church? and becauſe the *Albigenſes* lived under the protection of Princes

Princes that favoured them, how did the Popes depoſe their Princes, and inſtigate other ambitious invaders to ſeize on their dominions: which to effectuate, a *Croiſade* was proclaimed, that had been formerly practiſed againſt the Enemies of the Chriſtian Faith, and heaven was promiſed to ſuch as went againſt theſe poor innocents, whereupon they were killed by thouſands, without all mercy. Never was there any who had the zeal or honeſty in theſe dark ages to witneſs againſt the apoſtacy of the Church, but the Pope and Clergy uſed all means to get his zeal rewarded with a faggot. And when the time of reformation came, with what rage and ſpite did the Pope by his Letters and Legates inſtigate all the Princes of Europe to cruelty againſt them; but as theſe things were not done in corners, ſo they are ſtill ſo freſh in our remembrance, by the copious accounts we have of them, that I need not tell what Arts the Popes and other Eccleſiaſticks uſed, to ſet all *Germany* on fire upon this account: nor need I tell the

the cruelty was exerciſed in the Nether-Lands, in *Charles* the fifth his time, in which more than an hundred thouſand are ſaid by *Grotius* to have been butchered on the account of Religion. And in his Son *Philips* time, the D. of *Alva*, did in a ſhort time cut down 36000. Nor need I tell the cruelties were practiſed in *France* for about forty years together; nor of that treacherous Maſſacre wherein there was an equal mixture of perfidy and cruelty, which for all that was intertained at *Rome* with great joy and applauſes. It will be alſo needleſs to tell of their cruelty in *England* in *Queen Mary's* dayes, which was chiefly mannaged by the Churchmen. And many are yet alive who remember what enraged cruelty appeared in our neighbour-Iſland, againſt all of our Religion, which did not only flow from the fury of an oppreſſed People, but they were trained, encouraged, and waranded to it, by their Prieſts, and the *Nuntio* who came afterwards among them, diſcovered who was the ſpring of all their motions. Shall I

to

to this add all the private aſſaſſinati
committed on that account, which w
not only practiſed, but juſtified? I mi
here conceſt many inſtances; Brot
murdering Brother, on the accoun
Religion. Neither is *Clement* a *Domini*
his murthering Henry *the third*, *nor* C
ſtlets *attempt*, *nor* Ravalliacs *fact on* H
ry *the fourth*, *forgotten*. Q. Elizab
life, *is full of theſe attempts*, *and the bl*
eſt of them all was, *the Gunpowder trea*
all which are to be charged on
Church, becauſe the Doctrine of n
thering Heretique Princes, was tau
licenced, printed, and yet not cond
ned in it. From theſe hints we
gueſs, how much of the lowly, meek,
charitable Spirit, is to be found
them. But ſhould I to this add the
rid cruelties exerciſed in theſe maſſac
I ſhould be almoſt paſt belief, had I
undeniable Hiſtorians for verifying
but the mildeſt of them being to be
ned alive, we may gueſs what the n
ſavage have done by their tortures
lingering Deaths. Next, ſhall I men

their *Courts of Inquiſition* which have been among them in the hands of Churchmen, from the dayes of their pretended *Saint Dominick*, whoſe order have been the great Inſtruments of the cruelties of that Church, and whoſe procedure being tyed to no forms of equity, or juſtice, is as unjuſt as unmerciful, perſons being haled to their black Courts, upon bare ſuſpitions, or ſecret Informations, without leading of proofs againſt them, are by Torture examined, not only of their own opinions, but of all that are known to them, whoſe Teſtimony though drawn from them by cruel Torture, will bring the ſame Tortures on all they delate; neither is there any mercy for any whom this Court declares Heretick, but the Civil Magiſtrate muſt condemn them to the fire. Now what man that conſiders the meekneſs of Chriſt, and the Evangelical Spirit, can think that Church the Spouſe of Chriſt, that hath rioted it with ſuch ſavage rage, againſt thouſands of perſons, for no other crime, but becauſe they adhered firmly

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to the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and would not conſent or concur with theſe ſignal and palpable corruptions with which they have adulterated it.

But as from the conſtitution of their Church, we ſee their diſformity from the Goſpel-rule; ſo we will next conſider their Church-men, and we ſhall find how far they have ſtrayed from the firſt Original. Church-men ought to be the Guides and Paſtours of ſouls. Now, how little of this there is among them, we will ſoon be reſolved in: What do the Popes about the feeding of Souls? when do they preach the Goſpel? or diſpenſe the Sacraments? Alas! it were below the height of *his holineſs* to ſtoop to ſuch mean Offices. Does any veſtige of a Church-man remain in that Court? and do they not directly rule in the Spirit of the *Lords of the Gentiles?* And in this the Cardinals, Biſhops, and Abbots, do to their proportion imitate their moſt *Holy Father*, abandoning wholly the work of the Goſpel, as if they bore an empty title, or at moſt, were only bound

to say Mass on some greater Holy days; but in all other things do avowedly cast off the care of their Flocks. Shall I here tell of the relaxation of all the ancient rules, about the offices and duty of Church-men, which these latter ages have invented, *and mention how children are made Bishops, how they allow of Pluralities, Non-residencies, Unions, Commendams, Gratia expectativa's*, with a great many more corruptions, which are every day authorized and granted at *Rome?* and so zealous were they for these, that they struggled hard against the honest attempts of some at *Trent, who would have had residence declared of Divine right, and got it, though with much ado to be laid aside.* And thus it is that the Bishops and Abbots among them do for most part relinquish their Charges, to live at the Courts of Princes, and insinuate themselves upon all affairs and offices: And swarms of them go to *Rome*, gaping for preferment there. I deny not but even these late ages have produced great men among them, who seem to

have

have designed the reviving of the Ancient Discipline; both among the Clergy, and the People; but as these instances are rare, so they were hated and persecuted at *Rome* for their Zeal. Witness the condemning of *Arnolds Book of frequent Communion*, and the severity *Jansenius*, and the *Abbot* of St. *Cyran*, *with their followers, have met with*: And thus whatever individuals that Church may have produced, yet the corruptions I have hinted, are notoriously, publickly, and generally practised in it; and no where so avowedly, as at the Court of *Rome*. But to compence this defect of the Superior Clergy, they have swarms of the inferior ranks, every where, both secular and regular, who seem to mind the care of souls very seriously. But not to reflect again upon any thing hath been hitherto said of their bad conduct of souls, I shall now only take notice of the authority they pretend to, as if the People were bound blindly to follow their Confessors direction, as the voice of God, which clearly makes them the servants of men,

and ſubjects them to the heavieſt yoke, which is moſt directly contrary to the *liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free:* and what a rack to ſouls have they made Confeſſion; and what an Engine to get into the ſecrets of all the World, and to bring mankind under their ſubjection, is obvious enough to any that conſiders it: and to enforce it the more, as they teach it ſimply neceſſary to Salvation, ſo the authority they made the World believe the Prieſts were veſted with for pardoning ſin, together with their eaſie pardons and ſlight penances, did root it deep in the hearts of all of that Communion.

But I go next to examine the Sacraments, of which ſo much being ſaid already, little remains to be added. By their dividing the Cup from the Bread, they deſtroy Chriſts Inſtitution, and ſo make it no Sacrament, and the hearing of Maſs without communicating, though it make up the greateſt part of their worſhip, yet is purely a ſervice of their own deviſing, without warrant from Chriſts Inſtitution, who ſaid, *take, eat, this is my Body;*

Body; thereby ſhewing, he intended the virtue and benefit of that Ordnance, only for thoſe who received it. And in a word, let any read and compare the Inſtitution of the Lords Supper, as it is in *the three Goſpels, and the Epiſtle to the Corinthians*, together, with the whole office of the Maſs, as it is in the Roman Church; and then let him on his Conſcience paſs his verdict, whether they have adhered to, or departed from, Chriſts Inſtitution in that piece of their worſhip. Finally, one great end of all ſolemn Worſhip, being the Communion of Saints, in their joint adorations, and mutual concurrence in divine ſervices, what union can they have with God? Or what communion can they hold one with another? who perform all their Worſhip in an unknown Tongue, which is the rule and conſtant practice of that Church beyond Sea; though for the better venting of their ſophiſticated ſtuff among us, they give the people Books of devotion in their vulgar Language, yet continue to ſay the Office of the Maſs in Latin.

And thus far I have run a-round that great Circle, I propoſed to my ſelf in the beginning of this diſcourſe: And have examined the chief Deſigns of the Chriſtian Religion, and have found the great and evident contradictions, given to them in all their branches, by the eſtabliſhed and authorized Doctrines and Practiſes of that Church; in which I have fully juſtified the wiſe mans obſervation, that *he who increaſeth knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow*; and have ſaid enough to evince to all rational and conſidering minds, how unſafe it is for any that would keep a good Conſcience, to hold Communion with them. But I have not finiſhed my deſign, till I likewiſe examine the Characters of the Chriſtian Religion, and compare them with theſe are to be found in the Synagogue of *Rome*.

The firſt Character of our Faith is, that it was delivered to the World by men ſent of God, and divinely inſpired, who proved their Miſſion by Miracles. Now theſe Doctrines about which we differ from that Church can pretend to no ſuch

divine

divine original: Let them tell us what inſpired man, did firſt teach the worſhip of Images, of the Maſs, of Angels and Saints, and of Relicques; what man ſent of God was the firſt Author of the belief of the corporal Preſence, of the Sacrifice of the Maſs, of the Popes Supremacy, of Purgatory, of Indulgences, and of all theſe innumerable Superſtitions; of which the Scripture is abſolutely ſilent, for if theſe Doctrines were not the off-ſpring of Revelations, they are none of the Oracles of God, nor can we be obliged to believe them as ſuch. It is true, they vouch Scriptures for proof to ſome of theſe, but theſe are ſo far ſtretched, that their ſure retreat is in the Sanctuary of the Churches Traditions; but till a clear warrant be produced for proving it was impoſſible that any falſhood could have that way crept into the World, we muſt be excuſed from believing theſe. Neither is it poſſible to know what Traditions came from the Apoſtles, for as the Vulgar are not capable of purſuing the Enquiry, ſo the loſs of moſt of the Writings of the firſt

two Ages, makes it impossible to know what Traditions came from the Apostles.

But this I say not, that we need fear the trial, for the silence of the first and purest Ages, about these things which are controverted among us, is evidence enough that they were not known to them; especially, since in their Apologies which they wrote to the Heathens for their Religion and Worship, wherein they give an abstract of their Doctrines, and a Rubrick of their Worship, they never once mention these great evils, for which we now accuse that Church. It is true, a late ingenious Writer, whose sincere zeal and candor had much offended the *Roman* Court, and drawn censures on himself and his Book, took a way to repair his Reputation by a new Method of proving the truth of the Opinions held in the *Roman* Church; which was, that since the present Church held them, that shews that they had them so from their Ancestors, and they from theirs, till you run backwards to the days of the Apostles;

Apoſtles; alledging, that a change in
Worſhip was unpracticable, ſince it co
not be done in a corner, but in the vi
of all the World, who it is not to
imagined were capable of ſuffering a
great or conſiderable change to be ma
in that which was daily in their vie
and much in their eſteem; therefore
concludes, that every Generation adh
red to that Belief in which they w
born, and ſo no change in any great ſu
ſtantial and viſible part of worſhip co
be made. It is true, he applies this or
to the belief of the corporal Preſenc
which he attempts to prove could ne
have been introduced into the Churc
had it not been conveyed down from
Apoſtles. He hath indeed ſet off this w
all the beauties of wit, and elegancie
ſtile, and much profound reading. I
with how great and eminent advanta
both of reaſon and learning, this prete
hath been baffled, I leave it to the ju
ment of all who have been ſo happy a
read Mr. *Claud* his incomparable W
tings. And the common ſenſe of mank

will prove this but an Impoſture, how fairly ſoever adorned; for if we find it certain, that any Doctrines, or main Parts of Worſhip are now received into that Church, and if from the undeniable evidences of Hiſtory, and Writings of Ancients, it appear, that theſe things were not received in the ancient Church, then it is certain there hath been a change made from what was then to what is now, though an ingenious Invention may make it appear very difficult, to imagine how and when the change came in; eſpecially when it was inſenſibly, and by pieces advanced. If then it be proved, that the Fathers believed the Elements in the Sacrament were really Bread and Wine, and not changed from their own nature, but only types and figures of the Body of Chriſt, then we are ſure a change muſt have been made, though the ignorance of ſome Ages makes it a hard task to clear all particulars about it. It is true, the Fathers did highly magnifie this Sacrament, with many Expreſſions, which (though the vehemence of Divine Rhetorick

torick can well juſtifie, yet) will not bear a Logical *Examen*, but when they ſpeak in a cooler Stile, nothing can be more clear, than that they believed not the corporal preſence. But may not that reaſoning of the impoſſibility of a change in a worſhip, be as well applied to the taking the Chalice from the People, who in reaſon ſhould be imagined ſo tenacious of ſo great a priviledge, that no conſideration ſhould have obliged them to part with it? and yet we know, nor do they deny, how it was wrung from them, about 250 years ago. What may ſeem leſs credible than for the People to conſent, to have their worſhip in an unknown Tongue, and yet we know that all once worſhipped in their Mother Tongue, but that after (by the overthrow of the Roman Empire) the Latin Tongue decayed, the babarous worſhip was obtruded on the World? And what piece of worſhip is both more viſible, and more contrary to the cleareſt evidence of Scriptures, eſpecially to the commandments, in which the people were alwaies

ways instructed, then the worshipping of Images? And though we know well enough that for the first seven Centuries the Christian World abhorred them, yet within a hundredth years after that, we find a great part of it bewiched with them. And what can be thought more uneasie for the World to have received, than the Popes absolute authority over all the Churches and States of the World? One should think that though Religion and Reason, had lien out of the way, yet Interest, and Ambition, had withstood this: Yet we see clearly by what steps they crept up, from being Bishops of the Imperial City, in an equality of power with their neighbouring Bishops, into that culminating hight, to which they have now mounted. In a word, we refuse not to appeal to the first four Ages of the Church, in these matters that we quarrel the Roman Church for; We deny not but humane infirmity began soon to appear in the Church, and a care to gain on the Heathens, made them quickly fall upon some Rites, and use

some

ſome terms, which after-ages corrupted. But the ruin of Religion was, when the Roman Empire being overturned by the incurſion of the Northern Nations, in the beginning of the fifth Century, both Piety and Religion being laid to ſleep, inſtead of the Primitive ſimplicity of the faith and worſhip of the Chriſtians, they turned all their zeal to the adorning of the outwards of Religion, & hence the corruptions of the Church took their riſe.

But I had almoſt forgot to name ſome Revelations which that Church pretends to, even for ſome of her moſt doubtful opinions: Which are the viſions and extraordinary Inſpirations of ſome of their Saints, from which they vouch a divine confirmation to their Doctrines; I confeſs there is a great deal of extraordinary Viſions, Rapts, and Extaſies to be met with among the lives of their Saints, and I fear a great deal more than truth: For really whoſo will but read theſe writings, he muſt confeſs they are ſo far from being probable, or well contrived, that they ſpeak out their forgery.

Alas!

Alas! whereas St. *Paul* being put to Glory of Visions and Revelations, was to run back fourteen years for one. Their Saints are found in them every day. Are they not very credible Stories they tell of Christs appearing to some of their She-Saints, and kissing them, giving them Rings, being married to them, and celebrating nuptial Rites, making them drink out of his side, and leaving on them the prints of his wounds, with many other such like apparitions of the Virgin, and other Saints, which were either forgeries, dreams, or the effects of melancholly, or hysterical distempers; and yet these extravagant fables are given out to the people, as sacred pieces of Divine Revelations.

But the inspiration of the holy Writers, on which we found our Faith, was proved by their Miracles which they wrought publickly in the sight of many, and in the presence of their adversaries, many of whom were convinced by them; and it is certain, that whosoever offers any thing to anothers belief, pretending he comes to him in the Name of God, must

have

have ſome evident proof of his Divine Miſſion; ſince none are bound to believe him barely on his own teſtimony; otherwiſe there ſhould be no end of Impoſtures, if every pretender to Divine Inſpiration were to be believed without proof. Now the way it muſt be proved is, by ſome evidence of Gods extraordinary aſſiſting ſuch a perſon, which appeared always either in Propheſies or Miracles, but chiefly in Miracles under the New Teſtament; and therefore both Chriſt and his Apoſtles appeal to the mighty works they wrought, as the great confirmation of their Doctrine. If then there be new Doctrines brought into the Church, they muſt have the like confirmation, otherwiſe they are not to be believed.

But here thoſe of that Church think they triumph; for Miracles they have in abundance; not a Relique they have, but hath wrought mighty wonders; nor a Countrey-Saint, but the Curate of the place can gravely tell a great many deeds of his puiſſance; nor want the Images their marvellous atchievments, but wondrouſly won-

wondrous are the feats the Hosty hath performed: Here I am upon a sad Subject of that trade of lies and fictions, wherewith the *Merchants of that Babylon have so long traffiqued*; of which the sincerer among themselves are ashamed. How ridiculous are many of their miraculous narrations? Was it a worthy piece of the Angelical Ministration, for Angels to go trotting over Sea and Land with a load of Timber and Stones of the *Virgins house*, till at length they set it down at *Loretto*, that great devotions might be shown to it? It is a goodly story for to tell of a Saint that walked so far after his head was cut off, with it in his arms, resting in some places to draw breath; yet he will pass for an Infidel that should doubt of this at St. *Denis-Church*. Who can look on the Lives of the late Saints of that Church without nausea? *Gregories Dialogues* begun this trade, which indeed hath thriven well since. The miracles of the Christian faith were grave and solemn actions; but what ridiculous scenical stories, not to say blasphemous ones, meet us about the miracles

racles of their Saints? He that wou
know this, may read the Lives of
Francis, and St. *Dominic*, St. *Bridgit*, a
the two St. *Catherines*, and he will be
tisfied to a ſurfeit. The Miracles alſo
Chriſt and his Apoſtles were acted pu
lickly, in the view of all; but moſt
theſe narrations of their Wonders we
tranſacted in corners, none being w
neſſes but perſons concerned to own t
cheat: And the Doctrine of Equivoc
ting was a good cordial for the eaſe
their Conſciences, though they ſwo
what they knew falſe, according to tl
natural ſenſe of the words which th
uttered. Thus we have many fables
Chriſts appearing in the Hoſty, ſom
times as a child, and ſometimes as cr
cified, when but a very few of tl
whole company preſent, were hono
red with that amazing ſight.

Further, the Miracles of the Ch
ſtian Faith were written in the times
which they were acted, that ſo enq
ries might have been made into th
falſhood; and the powers that then g

verned; being enemies to the Faith, it was safe for its opposers, to have proved and discovered their forgery, had any such been. But many of the Miracles of *Rome* are not heard of, till some Ages, at least Years be past, whereby they are secure from the after-game of a discovery, and he were a stout man that would adventure to question the verity of these pretences at *Rome*, where it is the interest of that Church to have them all believed, without once questioning them. But how comes it, that in Heretical Countreys (as they call them) where there is more need of those Miracles, and where they might be more irrefragably proved, if true, since the Examiners of them were not to be suspected, *yet none of these mighty works do shew themselves forth?* Certainly, that they are to this day so rife in *Italy* and *Spain*, and so scant in *Britain*, is a shrewd ground to apprehend *Legerdemain*, and forgery, in the accounts we get of their later Saints. And indeed the Contrivers of these Stories have not managed their design by half,

half, so well as need was; for they have bestowed as many of them on one person, as might have Sainted the half of an Order. But the gain that is made by new Saints, and new Reliques, is well enough known; not to speak of the general advantage that Church pretends to draw from it.

In end, though some things among them did seem to surpass the known powers of Nature, these ought not to prevail upon us for departing from the truth; *since though an Angel from Heaven preached another Gospel, he is to be accursed*, Gal. 1. 8. If then they have so changed the Christian Doctrine by their Additions and Inventions, that it is become thereby as another Gospel; none of the seemingly Seraphical appearances they may have among them, though true, ought to reconcile us to it, and that the rather, since we were expressly guarded against this Imposture, by St. *Paul*, *who gave it as an Indication of the Son of Perdition, that his coming was after the power of Satan, with all power and signs, and*

lying wonders, and with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 9, 10. And it is a part of their curſe, that they are given up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies: *the Beaſt alſo that appeared to St.* John *Rev.* 13. 13. *did great wonders, ſo that he made Fire come down from Heaven, in the ſight of men, and deceived many, that dwelt on the Earth; by theſe Miracles which he had power to do.* But to conclude this; my greateſt quarrel, at theſe forgeries of Miracles is, that the people being taught to believe them, and the Miracles of the Goſpel, with an equal certainty, ſince they have the Teſtimony of the Church, for both, and they ſeeing ſuch evident Characters of fraud and forgery on theſe ſuppoſed miracles, whereby they are convinced of their falſhood, are thereby in danger of ſuſpecting all the Miracles of the Goſpel, as the tricks of ſubdolous and crafty men; whereby they run head-long to an Atheiſtical disbelieving the truth of all alike. And thus far we have found how oppoſite that Church is, to the Spouſe of Chriſt,

ſince

ſince her Doctrines are ſo ill founded, and look ſo like cunningly deviſed fables, without the authority of divine inſpiration, or the proof of true Miracles.

The next Character of our Faith is, its perſpicuity, and ſimplicity, all being called to the clear light of the day in it, and every part of it being ſo genuine, that it is apparent, it was not the contrivance of deſigning men, that by the belief of it they might obtain the power, and poſſeſs the riches of the World: And therefore there are no ſecret Doctrines in our Faith, which muſt be kept up from the Vulgar, whereby the Paſtors of Chriſtendom may have dominion over their ſouls. But what muſt we conclude of them, who by all means ſtudy to keep all of their Communion ignorant, as if devotion were thereby nouriſhed; and allow them not the uſe of the Scriptures in their Mother-tongue, nor a worſhip which they can underſtand, whereby it is, that they who *occupy the room of unlearned, cannot ſay* Amen, *at the giving of thanks, ſince*

they understand not what is said. To this might be added their implicite Faith, to all the Doctrines of the Church, without further inquiries; and their blind obedience to the *Confessarius*, be he never so ignorant and carnal. These are certainly darkening opinions, and practises, and far different from the methods of the Apostles, in preaching the Gospel, who with-held from the people nothing of the Counsel of God, and studied the enlightening their understandings, as well as the enlivening of their wills.

But further, how much of interest appears in the Doctrines of *Rome*, which tend to the exalting or enriching the Papacy, and inferiour Clergy, for it is visible what a trade they drive by them, and all the contrivances, all the projectours in *Europe* ever fell upon for enriching their Masters Treasury, falls short of the projects of Purgatory, the Treasure of the Church, Indulgences, and the Popes absolute authority, in making abrogating, and dispencing with all Positive Laws. Neither is there more

of

of deſign to be found in the *Alcoran*, than in the Myſteries of that *Caliph* of the *Spiritual Babylon*. And we may gueſs of their concernedneſs in theſe matters, ſince a gentler cenſure may be hoped for upon the violation of the greateſt of the Laws of God, than upon the leaſt contradiction to their idolized Intereſts. The one is the conſtant ſubject of their Studies, and Sermons, whereas the other is ſeldom minded.

The third Character of our Faith, is, that it is rational and ſuitable to our Souls, God having fitted it, and framed them ſo harmoniouſly, that they are congenial one to another. It is true, the Myſteries about God and Chriſt are exalted above the reach of our faculties, but even reaſon it ſelf teacheth that it muſt be ſo, ſince if there be a God, he muſt be infinite and incomprehenſible, and therefore it is not to be wondered, if the Scriptures offer ſome Myſteries to us about God and Chriſt, which choak and ſtifle the impreſſions we are apt to take of things. But in theſe, it is viſi-

ble, that the Object is so disproportioned to our faculties, that it is impossible we can reach or comprehend it; but as for the other parts of Religion, they are all so distinctly plain, that the reasonableness, as well as the authority of them, serve to commend them to us; but how void are they of this, who have made one of the chief Articles of their Faith, and the greatest matter of their worship, that which is, not only beyond, but contrary to, the most common impressions of Nature, which teacheth us, to believe our senses when under no lesion, and duly applied to a proper object. For indeed, in that case, we cannot really doubt but things are as they appear to us; for we cannot believe it mid-night, when we clearly see the Sun in the Meridian; nay, and our Faith rests on the evidences our senses give, since we believe, because Miracles were clearly seen by these who first received the Faith: And, *Christ said, believe me, for the very works sake, Joh.* 14. 11. And so their sight of these works was, a certain ground for

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their belief, therefore the ſenſes unvitiated, fixing on a proper object, through a due mean, are infallible; therefore what our ſight, our taſte, and our touch tell us, is Bread and Wine, muſt be ſo ſtill, and cannot be imagined to have changed its ſubſtance, upon the recital of the five words. Shall I add to this, that throng of abſurdities which croud about this opinion? For if it be true, then a body may be in more places at once, triumphing in glory in one, and ſacrificed in a thouſand other places: And a large body may be crouded into the narrow ſpace of a thin Wafer, they holding it to be not only wholy in the whole Wafer, but alſo intirely in every crumb of it: A body can be without dimenſions and accidents without a ſubject; theſe muſt be confeſſed to be among the higheſt of unconcievables; and yet theſe Miracles muſt be believed to be produced every day, in above a hundred thouſand places. Certainly, he hath a ſturdy belief who can ſwallow over all theſe abſurdities, without choaking on them.

It

It is little less unconceivable, to imagine, that a man of no eximious sanctity (nay, perhaps of noted impiety) nor extraordinarily knowing (nay, perhaps grosly ignorant) in Theological Matters, shall have the Holy Ghost so absolutely at his command, that whatever he decrees must be the Dictates of the Spirit. And what an unconceiveable mystery is the Treasure of the Church, and the Popes Authority to dispense it as he will? No less conceivable is the efficacy of the Sacraments, by the work wrought, nor is any thing more affronting to reason, than the barbarous worship. And of a piece with this is the blind subjection is pleaded for the *Confessarius* his Injunctions, and their opinions of expiating their sins by a company of little trifling penances, which tend not to the cleansing the Soul, nor killing of the life of sin, much less can be able to appease God, either of their own inbred worth, or by reason of any value God is pleased to set on them, either by Command or Promise. But should I reckon up every thing is among them

them that choaks reaſon, I ſhould dwell too long on this, and reckon over moſt of the things have been through the whole Diſcourſe hinted, which ſeem to ſtand in the moſt diametrical oppoſition to the cleareſt impreſſions of all mens reaſons.

But to bring my Enquiry to an iſſue, eaſineſs and gentleneſs are by Chriſt applied to his yoke, laws, and burden; and whatever oppoſition or trouble they may give to the carnal man, by mortifying his luſts, and contradicting all his inordinate and unlimitted deſires, yet by the rational faculties and powers they are both eaſily underſtood and practiſed. Indeed Religion lies in few things, and its chief work is the reforming and purifying the inward man, where it mainly dwells and exerts its force and virtue; but theſe who have added ſo much, both to be believed and done, beyond what our Lord preſcribed, as they accuſe his unfaithfulneſs, ſo bring unſupportable burdens on the Conſciences of Chriſtians: Theſe therefore who lead out the mind, by preſenting a great many foreign objects

objects to it, do introduce ſuperannuated Judaiſm, inſtead of that liberty Chriſt brought with him unto the World. But ſhall I number up here all the Impoſitions of that Church, whoſe numbers are great as well as their nature grievous; for it is a ſtudy to know them all, but what a pain muſt it be to perform them? It is a work which will take up a great deal of time to underſtand the *Rubricks of their Miſſals*, *Breviaries*, *Rituals*, and *Pontificals*. In a word, they have left the unity and ſimplicity of Religion, and ſet up inſtead of it a lifeleſs heap of Ordinances, which muſt oppreſs, but cannot relieve the Conſciences of their Diſciples.

Shall I add to this, the ſeverity of ſome of their Orders, into which by unalterable Vows they are engaged their whole lives? Now whatever fitneſs might be in ſuch Diſcipline, upon occaſions, for beating down the body or humbling of the mind, yet it muſt be very tyrannical to bind the perpetual obſervance of theſe on any by an oath, for thereby all the

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reſt of their lives may become inſupportably bitter to them, wherein they ſtand obliged, under perjury, to the perpetual obſervance of ſome ſevere Diſcipline; which, though at firſt in a novitious fervour might have had its good effects on them, yet that drying up, it will afterwards have no other effect but the conſtant dejecting of the ſoul, and ſo their life will be a rack to them by their perpetual toil in theſe auſterities. This I ſpeak of thoſe who ſeem the chief Ornaments of that Church, whoſe Devotion doth for moſt part turn to outwards, and reſts in the ſtrict obſervance of their rules, not without voluntary aſſumed mortifications, which they add to them, but wherein they for moſt part glory; and ſo the life of pride and ſelf-love (the ſubtilleſt of all our enemies) is fed and nouriſhed by them: Neither can we think, that theſe, whoſe exerciſes are ſo much external, can be ſo recollected for the inward and ſerene breathings of the Mind after God and Chriſt, without which, all externals, though they ſeem

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to make a *fair shew in the flesh*; yet are but a skelet of lifeless and insipid things. But indeed they have studied to remove this objection of the uneasiness of their Religion, by accommodating it so, that the worst of men may be secure of Heaven and enjoy their lusts both, according to the corrupt conduct of some of their spiritual Fathers: But what I have hinted of the uneasiness of their Religion, is taken from the Nature of their Devotions, in their highest altitude and elevation.

And thus far I have pursued my Design, in the tract whereof I have not been void of a great deal of pain and sorrow; for what pleasure can any find by discovering so much wickedness, and so many errours in the Christened Regions of the World, and see the holy and beautiful Places, wherein the former Ages worshipped God in the Spirit, turned to be habitations of Idols and graven Images, by which God is provoked to jealousie. God is my witness, how these thoughts have entertained me with horrour and

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regret, all the while I have conſidered them: And that I am ſo far from being glad, that I have found ſo much corruption in the *Roman* Church, that it is not without the greateſt antipathy to my nature imaginable, that I have payed this duty to truth, by aſſerting it with the diſcovery of ſo many Impoſtures, which have ſo long abuſed the Chriſtian world; and if any heat or warmth hath ſlipped from my Pen, I muſt proteſt ſincerely, it is not the effect of anger, or paſſion, but of a tender and zealous compaſſion, for thoſe ſouls who are either already blinded with theſe deluſions, or do incline towards *thoſe paths which lead to the chambers of death.*

I am none of thoſe who juſtifie rage or bitterneſs againſt thoſe in errours, for if we had the Spirit of Chriſt in us, we ſhould mourn over, and lament their miſery, who lye under ſo much darkneſs. And this is a ſure character to judge if our zeal for God and his truth be Divine and Evangelical, if it make us pour out Rivers of tears for thoſe that have gone

out

out of the way, rather than ſtreams of Fire againſt them. That zeal which raiſeth melting ſorrow, tender compaſſion, and fervent prayers for thoſe we ſee erring, is Chriſt-like, and worthy of that meek and charitable ſpirit which the Goſpel ſo much recommends: Whereas that which boils out in rage and foam againſt ſuch as err, and deſigns their ruin, and miſchief, and ſtudies how to perſecute, rather than convert them, and kindles in men bitter averſion to their perſons, together with rude harſhneſs in their behaviour to them, is all Antichriſtian and carnal. My deſign therefore in this diſcourſe is to provoke pity rather than wrath, and tears more than flames, towards thoſe deceived multitudes, that we may pray for them, rather than rail at them.

But my chief aim is to perſwade all who love their ſouls, to conſider the danger of continuing in the Communion of a Church, that hath not only fallen from her firſt love and purity, but hath in ſo many great and eſſential points corrup-

corrupted our moſt holy Faith, and adulterated the pure ſincerity of our worſhip.

I ſhall not here ſearch into the depths of the Mercies of God, how far they may reach any of that Communion, nor examin how far they hold the foundation Chriſt, notwithſtanding of all the baſe ſuperſtructures they have reared upon it, nor ſhall I conſider how far invincible ignorance may excuſe the guilt of an error, nor how applicable this may be to them, nor ſhall I diſcuſs how far the private differing from theſe errors may in many things ſecure ſome of the individuals of that Communion from the general guilt lies over them; upon all theſe particulars many things may be ſaid, and none alive is more willing to ſtretch his invention, for finding out grounds to fix his Charity on, than my ſelf. But all I can deviſe falls ſhort of a full and ſatisfying excuſe for thoſe who being educated in the knowledge of the truth and ſincerity of the Goſpel, do fall away into the errors and ſuperſtitions

ons of that Church; nor can I imagin what their temptations should be to it, except one of two: The first is, that they desire a sensible Religion, and therefore loath the simplicity and spirituallity of the Gospel, and love to have some glorious objects in Worship to strike on, and affect their senses: But however this may make impressions on the grosser rabble, yet certainly, any that considers that the perfection of man lies in his reason, and not in his outward senses, and that the exaltation of reason is Religion; he must confess that the less it dwell in the senses, and the more inward it become on the reason, it is the more suitable both to the nature of God, of Religion, and of the rational faculties. But the other consideration that may draw many to that Religion, is yet worse, which is, because in it a great allowance is given to all manner of sin, by the treacherous conduct of some Confessors, who perswade men of Heaven, on terms very easie and pleasing to flesh and blood. And hence it is that

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we see very few who have expressed any affection to a devout life, abandoning us to go over to the *Roman Communion*, most of those who do so, (except it be one of a thousand) being as void of virtue, as ignorant of the nature of true Religion; that we may say, *Joh. 2. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they had not gone out from us.*

These being the only visible tentations to entice any from our Communion to theirs, it is hard to preserve any great degrees of Charity for them: For a third tentation being that only which can work on a devout mind, takes with so few among us, that I need scarce name it, which is the solitary and retired houses among them for leading a devout and strict life, and the excellent Books of Devotion have been published by many of that Communion. This I know wrought mightily on one, and made him many times wish that he could with a good Conscience throw himself into one of these Religious houses; but the

consideration of these great corruptions lay so in his way, that without the doing the greatest force on his Conscience imaginable, and thereby securing damnation to himself by complying with things he judged so damnable, he durst not do it. Yet for his further satisfaction, he went among them, to see if their Worship appeared more amiable in practise, then it did in Writings; but I have heard him often declare, that though his mind was as free of prepossessions, as perhaps ever mans was, yet all he conceived of them, even from the Writings of their adversaries, was nothing compared to the impressions which the sight of their Worship left upon him, it appearing so Histrionical in all its circumstances, and so idolatrous in its substance, especially as he saw the Vulgar practise it. And for their Religious Houses, he was among a great many of all Orders, but was far from meeting with that spirit of devotion, he had hoped to find among them, for they always magnified their Order, and the little external austerities and

and devotions of it, but for genuine humility, a delight in God, and Chriſt, abſtraction from the world, (for all their frocks and retirements,) ſincere heavenly-mindedneſs, and fervent Charity to the Brethren, he regrated he had met with little of it among them. And that he found the ſeveral Orders full of emulation and envy at other Orders, and of heats among themſelves, which made him ſee, that he who meant to lead a devout life, muſt chooſe another Sanctuary than any of theſe he ſaw in that Communion.

I deny not, that it is the greateſt defect of the Reformation, that there are not in it ſuch encouragements to a devout life; though the intanglements of Vows to things without our power, is a manifeſt invaſion of the Chriſtian liberty; and to languiſh out ones life in a tract of laſie Devotion, without ſtudying to ſerve God in our Generation, ſeems contrary to the intendment of Religion, a great many of its Precepts being about thoſe Duties we owe our

Neighbours: Yet for all this, it is not to be denied to be a great defect that we want Recluse Houſes, for a ſtricter training up of thoſe who deſign to lead a ſpiritual life, and to ſerve in the Goſpel, that their minds being rightly formed before their firſt ſetting out they may be well qualified and furniſhed for their work. Such Houſes might alſo be retreating places for old Perſons, after they had ſerved their Generation, and were no more able to undergo toil and fatigue; they might be alſo Sanctuaries for devout Perſons, in times of their greater afflictions or devotions. But for all this want, it fixeth no imputation on our Church, her Doctrine, or Worſhip, that ſhe is ſo poor, as not to be able to maintain ſuch Seminaries. But on the way, it is no great character of the Piety of their Church, that ſhe abounds ſo with great and rich dotations, when we conſider the Arts they uſed for acquiring them, by making People believe themſelves ſecure of Heaven by ſuch donations: Indeed, had we got our People befooled

befooled into ſuch perſwaſions, the cheat might have proſpered as well in our hands; but we are not of thoſe, *who handle the Word of God deceitfully*; nor will we draw the People even to do good with a crafty guile, *or lye for God.*

But now, as a concluſion to this Diſcourſe, I muſt conſider, if all things among us be ſo ſound and well grounded, that with a quiet Mind and good Conſcience every one may hold Communion with our Church, and hope for Salvation in it, I ſhall therefore briefly run over the Nature and Characters of the Chriſtian Faith, to ſee if any contradiction to them, or any part of them, be found among us. And firſt of all, we worſhip God in Spirit, as a Spiritual Being, with ſuitable Adorations, which we direct to no Image nor Symbol of the Divine Preſence, but teach, that we ought not to figure God to any corporeal being, no not in our thoughts; neither do we worſhip any, beſide God the Father, Son, and Spirit: We alſo worſhip Chriſt, but as he is God, and

hath the fulneſs of the God-head dwelling in him bodily: Angels indeed we honour, but knowing them to be our fellow-ſervants, we cannot pray to them, or fall down before them: We count the holy Virgin *bleſſed among women*, but dare give her no ſhare of the glory due to her Son: All the Saints we reverence and love, but knowing God to be a *jealous God*, we cannot divide that honour among them, which is only due to him, and therefore do neither worſhip them, their Images, nor their Reliques. We deſire alſo to offer up to God ſuch Sacrifices as we know are well-pleaſing to him, *Prayers, Praiſes, broken and contrite Hearts, and our Souls and Bodies*, but reject all Charms and Enchantments from our Worſhip, as contrary to the *reaſonable ſervice which is acceptable to God*, and do retain the genuine ſimplicity of the Goſpel-worſhip, in a plain and intelligible ſtile and form, without any mixtures drawn from Judaiſm or Gentiliſm: And thus there is nothing among us contrary to the firſt deſign of Religion.

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And as little will be found againſt the ſecond, which is the honour due to Chriſt in all his Offices: We teach our People to ſtudy the Scriptures, and to examine all we ſay by them, and exhort them to depend on God, who by his Spirit will teach them as well as us; neither do we pretend to an authority over their Conſciences, but acknowledge our ſelves men of like infirmities with the People, who are all called to be a *Royal Prieſthood*; and thus we honour Chriſts Prophetical Office, by founding our Faith only on the Divine Authority of the Scriptures. *We alſo believe, there is no Name given under Heaven by which we can be ſaved, but the Name of Chriſt, who laid down his Life a ranſom for our Souls, that by his Croſs we might be reconciled to God*; and it is to that one Sacrifice, that we teach all to fly for obtaining remiſſion of ſins and the favour of God, truſting only to it, and to nothing we have done or can do, knowing that when we have done all we can do *we are but unprofitable ſervants*; much leſs do we hope for any thing

thing from any of our fellow-creatures: We apply our Souls to no Interceſſour but Chriſt, and truſt to no Satisfaction but his, and we acknowledge him the only King of his Church, whoſe Laws muſt bind it to the end of the World. Neither do we acknowledge any other Authority, but his, over our Conſciences. It is true, in things indifferent, he hath left a power with his Church to determine in thoſe Matters, which may tend to advance order, edification, peace, and decency; but as the Church cannot add to our Faith, ſo neither can it inſtitute new pieces of Worſhip, which ſhall commend us to God, or bind any load upon our Souls. We own a Miniſterial Authority in all the Paſtors of the Church, which they derive from Jeſus Chriſt, and not from any viſible Head on earth, and therefore they are only ſubject to Chriſt. We alſo hold, that the Civil Powers are of Chriſt, whoſe Goſpel binds the duty of obedience to them more cloſely on us, and therefore if they do wrong, we leave them to

Chriſts

Chriſts Tribunal, who ſet them up, but pretend to no power from his Goſpel to coerce or reſiſt them; and thus we honour Chriſt in all his Offices, and ſo are conform to the ſecond branch of the deſign of our Faith.

We alſo receive the third with the ſame fidelity, and whatever the practices of too too many among us be, yet there is no ground to quarrel our Doctrine; we preach repentance to all, and ſtudy to convince them of their miſery, and loſt eſtate; that they may mourn for their ſins, and turn to God by a new courſe of life; we preach Faith through Chriſt in God, as that which unites our ſouls to him, by which we are in Chriſt, and Chriſt is in us. We ſtir up our people *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, ſtrength, ſoul, and mind, and to wait for his Son Chriſt Jeſus, who is the hope of glory and ſhall change our vile bodies into the likeneſs of his glorious Body.* And from this great motive do we preſs our people to the ſtudy *of holineſs, without which they ſhall never ſee God.*

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We ſend them to the ten Commandments for the rule of their lives, whoſe expoſition we chiefly take *from Chriſts Sermon on the mount*; neither can we be charged for having taught the People, to break one of the leaſt of theſe Commandments. We exhort all our hearers to make the life of Chriſt the pattern of theirs, and to learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart; neither can our Church be accuſed of having taught any Carnal Doctrines, for gratifying the baſe Intereſts of the fleſh, or for ingroſſing the power or treaſure of the World, the ſubſiſtance of our Church-men, being but a lively-hood, and not a treaſure. In a word, *we preach Chriſt and him Crucified*, and all the rules of his Goſpel, for ordering the converſation aright, without adding, or taking from it; and thus our conformity to the third branch of Chriſtianity appears.

We teach alſo according to the fourth branch of Chriſtianity, the Doctrines of Charity, neither do we condemn any who holds the foundation, though in

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ſome leſſer matter they differ from us; but hope they may be ſaved as well as we. We abhor the Doctrine of cruel perſecuting of any for their Conſciences: The outmoſt we allow of, or deſire of that nature, being the preſervation of our own Societies, pure from the contagion of other Traffiquers, and the driving from us thoſe who do ſo diſturb us. All the authority we give the Church, is Paternal, and not Tyrannical, our Church-men we hold to be the Paſtors, but not the Lords of the flock, who are obliged to feed them ſincerely, both by their Doctrine, Labours, and whole Converſation; but we pretend to no blind obedience due to their directions, and count them noble Chriſtians, who ſearch and try all they ſay by that Teſt of the Scriptures: We ſend the People to confeſs their ſins to God, from whom only we teach them to expect their pardon, and pretend to no other keys, but Miniſterial ones, over publick and known Scandals. In our Worſhip, as all do underſtand it, ſo every

every one may joyn in it. And in the number, use, and simplicity of our Sacraments, we have religiously adhered to the Rules of the Gospel, we holding them to be solemn federal Rites of our Stipulation with God, in which if we do worthily partake of them, we are assured of the Presence of the Divine Spirit and Grace, for uniting our Souls more intirely to God, and advancing us in all the ways of the Spirit of Life; and if the Institution of them in the Gospel, be compared with our Administration of them, it will appear how close we have kept to our Rule.

And thus we see how exactly conform the Doctrine of our Church is to the whole Branches of the Christian Design; upon which it is not to be doubted, but the Characters of the Christian Religion will also fit ours: We found our Faith only on the Scriptures, and though we pay a great deal of venerable esteem to the Churches of God during their purity, which continued above four Centuries, and so be very willing to be deter-

determined in Rituals and Matters that are external and indifferent by their Opinions and Practices, yet our Faith ſettles only on the Word of God, and not on the Traditions of Men; neither do we believe every Spirit that pretends to Rapts and Viſions, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God or not, and *though an Angel ſhould preach to us another Goſpel, we would hold him accurſed.* The Miracles we truſt to, as the Proofs of the Truth of that Revelation which we believe, are only thoſe contained in the Scriptures; and though we believe there was a wonder-working power continued for ſome time in the Church, yet we make a great difference betwixt what we hiſtorically credit, and what we religiouſly believe; neither will we, for ſupporting our Intereſt or Authority, have recourſe to that baſe trade of forging lying Wonders, but we reſt ſatisfied with the Miracles Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought for the proof of the Religion we own, ſince what we believe, is no other than what they taught, and

and therefore we leave the trade of forging new Miracles, to them who have forged a new Religion.

And for the plain genuines of the Gospel, we have not departed a step from it, since we call upon our People by all the motives we can devise, and with all the earnestness we are Masters of, to receive full and clear Instruction in all the Matters of our Religion, which we distinctly lay open to them. And nothing of Interest or Design can be charged on us, who pretend to nothing but to be the *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; nor have we offered to sophisticate the simplicity of our Worship by any additions to it, for the determining about some particular forms is no addition to Worship, but only the following forth of these Precepts of doing all things to edification, peace, and order: But an addition to Worship is, when any new piece of Divine Service is invented, with a pretence of our being more acceptable to God thereby, or of our receiving Grace by that conveyance, and

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therefore any Rites we have, as they are not without ſome hints from Scripture, ſo we pretend not to become any way acceptable to God by them.

Further, we teach no irrational nor unconceivable Doctrine: It is true there are Myſteries in our Faith, and even reaſon it ſelf teacheth, that theſe muſt be unconceivable; but for all our other perſwaſions they are ſuch as may be well made out to the rational faculties of man; therefore we do not betake our ſelves to that Sanctuary, that we muſt be believed, aſſert what we pleaſe; but we aſſert nothing but what we offer to evince by the cleareſt proofs. And in fine, we add nothing to the burdenſomneſs of the Laws of Chriſt, but teach and propoſe them as we have them from his Goſpel, without adding, changing, or altering a tittle from the firſt Inſtitution.

And ſo far have I conſidered the Doctrine and Worſhip of our Church, wherein if I could juſtify all our *Practices*, as well as I can do our *Principles*,

there were no grounds to fear hurt from all the Cavils of Mortals. But for bad practices, whatsoever matter of regrate they may furnish us with, they afford none for separation: Therefore, there is no ground that can justify a separation from our Church, much less warrant the turning over from us to the Communion of *Rome*: And thus far have I pursued my designed Enquiry, which was, if with a safe Conscience any might adjoin themselves to the Popish Religion, or if Communion with our Church was to be kept and continued in; and have found great grounds to assert the evident hazards of the former; so that no man to whom his salvation and welfare is dear, can, or ought to joyn himself to that Church; on the other hand, without renting the Body of Christ, none can, or ought to depart from our Churches: But I leave the perusal and considering of these things to the serious Reader, to whom I hope they may give some satisfaction, if he bring with him to the Enquiry an atten-

attentive, ſerious, and unbyaſſed mind. And I leave the ſucceſs of this, and every other attempt of this Nature, for the clearing of Divine truth, with him who is the only Fountain of Bleſſings, who is over all, God bleſſed for evermore, *Amen.*

FINIS.

Errata.

PAge 15. *line 6. for* formerly *read* formally. *l.* 24. Abuſes *r.* Abaſes. *p.* 30. *l.* 14. forewarnes *r.* warnes. *p.* 51. *l.* 1. where *r.* what. *p.* 52. *l.* 9. but *r.* yet. *p.* 54. *l.* 24. *dele* a. *p.* 64. *l.* 18. betwixt *add* that. *p.* 91. 3 *r.* this. *p.* 99. *l.* 5. enhanſing *r.* engroſſing. *l.* 8. tranſmitting *r.* tranſmuting. *p.* 103. *l.* 16. ſince *r.* for. *p.* 110. *l.* 18. or *r.* for. *p.* 138. *l.* 13. unity *r.* purity.

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